Pesticide Application Tips

These tips will help you apply pesticides safely and easily!

Read the label of the pesticide product before you buy it. Be sure you are buying the right pesticide product for your need. Decide if you can apply the pesticide as stated on the label. If you can’t, can you have someone apply it for you? Depending on the kind of pest problem you have, you may decide you need to hire a pest control company or a lawn care service to take care of your problem for you.

Buy pesticides in the easiest-to-use forms you can. Buy only the amount of pesticide you need to take care of your immediate problem or for the current season. Don’t stockpile pesticides. Be sure you have any equipment you need to apply the pesticide. This includes sprayers, dusters and lawn spreaders. It also includes the personal protective equipment and clothing found on the pesticide label. You must wear any personal protective equipment stated on the label; it is not just a suggestion! This may include waterproof gloves or chemical-resistant gloves, goggles, a respirator, hat, coveralls and waterproof foot coverings.

Also be sure you have on hand any materials, such as cat litter, and tools, such as a disposable broom, needed to clean up spilled pesticide. Clean up spills immediately. Know what to do in case of an emergency before you use a pesticide. Read the label and follow the directions exactly.

Measure pesticides accurately. Keep a separate set of tools used only for mixing and applying pesticides. This includes measuring spoons and cups and stirring paddles. Use plastic or metal items, not glass or wood. Open and mix pesticides outdoors. Mix only the amount of pesticide you will use. Use all that you mix. You should wear the personal protective equipment and clothing when opening and mixing the pesticide. Don’t wear leather gloves. Wear rubber gloves made to resist pesticides.

If you use or plan to use outdoor pesticides regularly and plan to use insecticides and herbicides, get a separate sprayer for the herbicides and a separate sprayer for insecticides. Even after careful rinsing a sprayer can contain herbicide residues that can injure or kill sensitive plants. Keep this in mind if you borrow or rent a sprayer or if you loan yours out.

Remove toys, pet feeding dishes and any other items that might be contaminated by the pesticide from the treatment area. Don’t replace them until the waiting time on the label is up. Cover aquariums indoors and ornamental fish ponds outdoors. Keep people, especially children, and pets out of the area you are treating. Don’t let them back into the treated area until the time the label says you can has passed.

Don’t spray when it is windy. Don’t stand under anything you are treating, such as a tree branch, eave or ceiling. Don’t walk over surfaces, such as a lawn, as you treat them, or over surfaces you have just treated. Don’t smoke or use tobacco products while applying pesticides. Don’t eat or drink while you are applying pesticides.

For best control, time your treatment to the right stage of the pest’s life cycle. This helps prevent or reduce the need for reapplication.

Direct the pesticide application to the treatment locations stated on the label. Some pesticides, especially indoor-use products, have a picture to show you where to apply the pesticide for best
results. Treat only the kinds of plants or sites listed on the label.

Be sure to read and follow all label directions. For instance, some lawn pesticide labels may tell you to cut the lawn first, or to water in the product after application. The label may tell you not to apply to certain turf grasses, or not to apply if turf is drought-stressed.

Clean up your application equipment and yourself immediately after you have finished applying the pesticide. Store pesticides away from children. Do not store them where they could contaminate food, feeds and seeds, or water.

Follow the label directions for time to harvest of food plants, and for reentry or reuse of treated areas or surfaces. The pesticide label may tell you to keep children or pets out of the treated area until the spray dries, or for 24 hours, or give other similar instructions. Some indoor pesticide labels tell you to keep a room or building closed for a period of time after treatment. Some other indoor pesticide labels may tell you to ventilate a treated room or building before it is used again.

You should find out why you have a pest problem and try to correct conditions that may have caused it. If you do this you may not have the problem again and may not have to use a pesticide again.

If you have any questions on identifying pests, on how to prevent them, how to control them or how to use pesticides safely, call your county Extension agent. Your county Extension office is listed in the phone book under Clemson University or county government.

**Measurements for Using Pesticides**

**Liquid Measures:**
- 3 teaspoons (tsp.) = 1 Tablespoon (Tbs.)
- 2 Tablespoons = 1 ounce (oz.)
- 8 ounces (ozs.) = 1 cup
- 2 cups = 1 pint (pt.) = 16 ozs.
- 2 pints = 1 quart (qt.) = 32 ozs.
- 4 quarts = 1 gallon (gal.) = 128 ozs.

**Rates Example (for liquid measure):**
- 2 ounces per gallon = 4 Tablespoons or ¼ cup per gallon

**Dry Measures:**
- 3 Tablespoons (Tbs.) = 1 ounce (oz)
- 16 ounces = 1 pound (lb.)

**Area Measures:**
- 12 inches (in.) = 1 foot (ft.)
- 3 feet = 1 yard (yd.)
- 1 square yard = 9 square feet

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This information is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service is implied. All recommendations are for South Carolina conditions and may not apply to other areas. Use pesticides only according to the directions on the label. All recommendations for pesticide use are for South Carolina only and were legal at the time of publication, but the status of registration and use patterns are subject to change by action of state and federal regulatory agencies. Follow all directions, precautions and restrictions that are listed.