Pesticide Container Disposal

Once you have used all of a pesticide product, what should you do with the empty container? To dispose of empty homeowner-use pesticide containers properly, follow the directions provided on each product label.

A Primary Rule for Pesticide Containers is:
Never save or reuse an empty pesticide container for any reason.

The directions for pesticide container disposal differ from product to product. Some typical container disposal statements found on labels are as follows:

- "Replace cap and discard in trash." or
- "Securely wrap partially filled or empty container in several layers of newspaper and discard in trash. Do not reuse empty container." or
- "Do not reuse empty bag. Discard bag in trash." or
- "Do not reuse empty container. Rinse thoroughly before discarding in the trash."

If the label on your empty pesticide container tells you to rinse the container, do not pour rinse water into a household drain, on the ground, or into a gutter or storm drain. The rinse water may be used to dilute the pesticide in your sprayer or applicator container to the correct concentration, or it may be sprayed directly on your target site.

For ready-to-use products that do not need to be diluted, such as some lawn weed-control products or indoor-use insecticides, do not rinse the container. There is not a good way to dispose of this rinse water. Some lawn pesticide products come in a single-use hose-end sprayer. You should not try to open these containers.

While you should not reuse pesticide containers, a limited number of homeowner-use products do have refills available that allow refill and reuse of the application container but only with exactly the same product.

Household pesticide containers may NOT be recycled in most community recycling programs. Do not burn, do not incinerate and do not puncture aerosol containers. In South Carolina, you may not burn or incinerate any pesticide container, even those made of paper or cardboard, including bags which contained products that are premixed fertilizer and pesticide(s).

Be safe, not sorry.

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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.