



Ohio Pesticide Safety Education Program

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Pesticide Applications in Community Gardens

Community gardens are an opportunity for people to grow produce for their families when they live somewhere without a roomy backyard. Like other gardeners, they will need to manage pests such as weeds, insects, and disease to grow a bountiful crop. Pesticides, both organic and conventional, are a tool that can be used to manage pests and questions may be raised during the community garden project about the role these should have in managing pests.

What is a pesticide?

A pesticide is defined by U.S. EPA as a product used to prevent, destroy, or repel pests. In addition to products used in gardens to control pests, cleaning products used in kitchens and bathrooms that kills germs and bacteria are also considered a pesticide. All products that make a claim to kill, destroy, or repel pests must be registered through U.S. EPA. The registration process includes testing on possible human-health exposure whether through exposure to the person applying the pesticide, or to people who will be eating the food. The food-testing, or tolerances, determine the maximum residue limit. These tolerances are set to be safe for children to consume the foods, plus a 10x safety factor.

Avoiding home remedies

Home remedies, such as using vinegar from the kitchen shelf, sound natural. But the reality is the gardener is using a product that has not been tested for safety on that crop or the possible exposure to humans when it's being applied. Tolerances on the amount of a home remedy that can be applied have not been established to reduce risk.

Organic and other pesticides are available that have either been tested by EPA. There minimum risk pesticides which do not require federal testing, but still require label approval by the Ohio Department of Agriculture to be sold and used in Ohio.

If the food produced in a community garden is being sold, or given away to a food bank or other people for consumption, it's illegal to use anything other than a labeled pesticide product that is approved for use on that crop. The safety of the food supply for people who will be consuming the crops is an important consideration for gardeners.

Is a license needed for community gardens?

Registered, labeled products are either classified as general- or restricted-use pesticides. Gardeners are able to purchase general-use pesticides at local stores. Licenses are required to purchase restricted-use pesticides because the products require additional knowledge before use. An exception is if the community garden is located on public property (such as a city-owned lot) and the applications are being made by an employee of the public agency. Public employees and people who make applications for hire are required to be licensed for both general and restricted-use products.

What products should be used in a community garden?

Pesticide labels have a wealth of information for gardeners. The label contains the proper use and rates for the product and will have the approved crops listed. To use a pesticide, organic or other, the crop MUST be on the label. For example, if the gardener is using an insecticide on tomatoes, it must be labeled for use on tomatoes. A product that only lists lawns and turf as application sites can't be used on tomatoes.

If community garden supervisors have further questions about pesticide regulation or licensing, please encourage them to call the Pesticide Safety Education Program at 614-292-4070 or visit our website at <http://pested.osu.edu>

Comment Period Opened for Worker Protection Standard Changes

The comment period for the proposed rule changes to the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) has opened and will be available until June 17. The federal register notice which contains links for commenting is available at: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0184-0119> EPA has an information page about the proposed rule changes at: <http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/safety/workers/proposed/index.html> A summary of some of the major new proposed rule changes, compared with the current rule, are:

Pesticide Safety Training

Current- Train workers and handlers every 5 years

Proposed- Train workers and handlers every year. Stricter qualifications will be added for trainers of workers

Current- Current training includes hazards from residues on clothing and includes warnings not to take containers home.

Proposed- Expand training content to include information on reducing take-home exposure.

Current- Grace period of 5 days before full-WPS training is required.

Proposed- Grace period reduced to 2 days with added requirement of information sheet of training points. Additional training also added to the pre-grace period content.

Current- No requirement for recordkeeping of training

Proposed- Recordkeeping of training required to be kept for 2 years

Mandatory Posting of No-Entry Signs

Current- Either oral or posted notification is acceptable for Restricted Entry Interval (REI) unless the pesticide labeling requires both.

Proposed- Require posting of treated areas when REI is greater than 48 hours.

Minimum Age

Current- No age requirements

Proposed- Pesticide handlers and early-entry workers must be at least 16 years old. Members of owner's immediate family are exempt from this requirement.

Entry Buffer Areas

Current- Only nurseries and greenhouses require a no-entry buffer area adjacent to area being treated.

Proposed- Entry will be prohibited to 25 – 100 foot buffer areas during pesticide applications on farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses. The buffer size will depend on the type of application.

Respirators

Current- Employer must provide the respirator listed on the pesticide labeling and ensure fit. No recordkeeping is required.

Proposed- Adopt the OSHA standard for respirators which includes a fit test, medical evaluation, and training. Recordkeeping will be required to document completion of these requirements.

Closed Systems

Current- The closed system definition does not provide specific criteria for PPE exception.

Proposed- Specific performance standard requirements will be added for closed systems based on the California standard to permit PPE exceptions. (Does not include the California requirement to use closed systems for certain types of pesticides.)

Hazard Communications

Current- Application-specific information must be posted at a central display until 30 days after the REI expires. There is no requirement to make safety information available to authorized representatives for workers and/or handlers.

Proposed- Require employers to maintain application-specific information, labeling and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and make available to workers, handlers, or their authorized representatives. This information must be retained for two years.

Proposed- Remove requirement to post application-specific information at central display.

Notification for Early-Entry Workers

Current- Early-entry workers (entering before REI has expired) must be informed on hazards listed on pesticide labeling

Proposed- Notification expanded to also include the pesticide application (what was applied, when and where), specific task to be performed, and amount of time the worker is allowed to remain in the treated area.

Current- No recordkeeping required of early-entry notifications

Proposed- Records kept for 2 years of the notifications provided to early-entry workers

Definition of Immediate Family

Current- Does not include grandparents, grandchildren, or in-laws as immediate family

Proposed- Expand to include those listed above.

(Source: EPA Office of Pesticide Programs, March, 2014)

What is the Worker Protection Standard?

Growers who are raising plant crops and using pesticides (including organic pesticides) may be under the Worker Protection Standard (WPS). The WPS is designed to protect agricultural workers who are working in fields or greenhouses that have been treated with pesticides. WPS also contains protections for handlers who are applying or working with pesticides as part of their job working for a farmer or grower.

The regulations is applied farms with fields where pesticides have been used and workers are entering the field within 30 days of the restricted entry interval expiring. For example, if a vineyard had a preemergence herbicide applied at 9:00 a.m. today and the restricted entry interval was 24 hours, then the 30 days would start tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. If farm workers enter that vineyard to do some spring pruning two weeks after the application, the vineyard grower has to comply with the WPS.

Worker Protection is for workers and handlers who are involved with the production of plants or agricultural research facilities that are focusing on plants. Worker Protection does not include livestock farms or productions, so these farmers only need to comply if they are also raising crops or other plant material.

More information about the Worker Protection Standard is available on the Pesticide Safety Education Program website at: <http://pested.osu.edu/wps.html>

Upcoming Events

More information about the following events is at: <http://pested.osu.edu>

Pesticide Safety Training – Commercial New Applicators & Trained Servicepersons

March 26, 2014

April 30, 2014

May 21, 2014

August 27, 2014

September 24, 2014

Core and Trained Serviceperson trainings are held in the morning, and Categories 8, 5, 2c, and 6c in the afternoon.

Taught at the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Reynoldsburg, Ohio

Wood-Destroying Insect Inspection Training

April 8, 2014 - Mandatory training required for applicators becoming licensed in commercial category 12. Recertification credit is available.

Taught at the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Reynoldsburg, Ohio

Pesticide Training Inservice – OSU Extension Educators

December 16 & 17, 2014 – Ohio 4-H Center, OSU Columbus Campus

2015 Ohio Pesticide Commercial Applicator Recertification Conferences

January 22, 2015 – Sandusky, Kalahari Conference Center

January 29, 2015 – Dayton Convention Center

February 18, 2015 – Akron, John S. Knight Center

March 11, 2014 – Columbus Convention Center

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