

# Home Gardener Should Read And Follow Labels

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Lancaster Farming Staff  
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Take this short quiz. Question: What are homeowners supposed to do about old chemicals in old pesticide containers? Choose the correct answer: A. Dump the chemicals down the drain. B. Stick the unused chemical in another jar and leave sit until you can get rid of it at another date. C. Bury the containers in the backyard. D. None of the above.

The answer is, certainly, D. These are some of the questions that home gardeners ask about pesticides and fertilizers. Many questions were addressed at the Lancaster Co. Home Horticulture Seminar (Simple Garden Chemistry) last week at the Farm and Home Center.

### Follow procedures

For unused portions of pesticides and their containers, the best thing is to follow the proper procedures for disposal, according to H. Bruce Hellerick, horticulture extension agent.

"Don't throw it down the sewer — it's not good for the environ-

ment and you could be in trouble if they catch you doing that," said Hellerick. Use any remaining product according to the label — or, for Lancaster Co. residents, simply phone the Lancaster Solid Waste Disposal Authority and arrange a time to come in to dispose of the container.

Also, mix only the pesticides you are going to use — do not store mixed pesticides for future use.

Hellerick examined the trade names and labels of various home pesticides, including herbicides, fungicides, and other types.

### Identify pest

To handle lawn and garden pests, homeowners should first identify the pest. Consult with the local extension office or read publications (including "Pest Suggestions For Insects and Diseases," a Penn State publication available for \$8 from your extension office). Determine if the pest is either "a good guy or a bad guy," said Hellerick. If the number of infestation is small, perhaps no treatment is necessary.

The next step is to scout and see how many pests are there. "We

have to be out there constantly looking at the plants — really get down and look for the insects," he said.

Next, treat according to several options, including sprays, traps, or other techniques, including (in the case of tree infestation) skirts. Home gardeners can also look for egg masses during the winter and simply scrape them off and dispose of them properly.

Afterward, home gardeners should assess the problem. "If it didn't work, then we have to do something else. We have to use all steps necessary — it's a whole cycle, all the way through," he said.

### Read label

The best thing for the gardener is to carefully read the pesticide label and watch for application conditions. Many herbicides have residual affects and have restrictions on what type of areas can be applied. Others have the same EPA registered chemicals sold under different brand names — but are essentially the same product, according to Hellerick.

Gardeners should consider purchasing only those chemicals they need for one season.

Hellerick also described fertilizer applications and what types of fertilizer to look for. Growers should take time to read the type of

fertilizer on the package and discern the differences between water soluble and water insoluble nitrogen.

Also, liming is important to the soil and to how nitrogen, micronutrients, and pesticides work on the plants.

### Plant applications

Other types of plant applications, including root developers, blossom and fruit sets, wilt preventers, and leaf cleaning chemicals were discussed.

Hellerick cautioned gardeners to beware of claims by some of the product manufacturers as to "miracle type things," he said.

"Go back and find out what the product is, and see if it is nothing more than ordinary elements. In this case, it's the buyer beware.

"We're trying to raise your consciousness," he said. "When you're going to the garden center, we want you to make an informed decision about what products to purchase."

## Scholarships Enhance Food Science Programs

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — General Mills will award a \$1,500 scholarship to a junior at the Penn State food science department.

Another \$1,500 scholarship will be given to an outstanding senior in food science who plans to enroll in a graduate program or to an outstanding candidate for a food science graduate degree.

Recipients for both scholarships will be selected by food science faculty members and representatives of General Mills and are renewable on an annual basis at the discretion of General Mills.

A \$15,000 scholarship fund to benefit Penn State students interested in mushroom science technology has been established in the memory of James "Jim" Robers, former owner and president of a Coatesville spawn company.

Penn State alumnus John B. Swayne Jr. has given \$250,000 to endow a professorship at Penn State University College of Agriculture in honor of his father, a pioneer in the state's commercial mushroom industry.

The professorship will strengthen research and teaching programs in mushroom science.



H. Bruce Hellerick, horticulture extension agent, reviews different types of garden fertilizers at the Home Horticulture Seminar last week at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center.



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