



IT'S YOUR HEALTH



Homemade Pesticides

The Issue

Preparing, storing, and using homemade pesticides could pose risks to your health and the environment.

Background

In recent years, more and more homeowners and gardeners have been looking for alternatives to traditional pesticides for use in their homes and gardens. As a result, you can now find many recipes for pest control products on the Internet and in published literature. These recipes are for products that claim to address a wide variety of situations, from controlling insects to repelling large animals.

Health Canada is advising consumers to be aware that preparing, storing, and using homemade pesticides may pose health and environmental safety risks; and reminds Canadians that any pesticide should be used judiciously, be it conventional or homemade.

How the Safety of Pesticides is Regulated in Canada

Prior to importation, sale, or use in Canada, all pesticides must be registered

under the *Pest Control Products Act (PCPA)*, which is administered by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). The primary objective is to prevent unacceptable risks to people and the environment from the use of pesticides. To accomplish this, the PMRA evaluates pesticides before they are registered to ensure that they meet the latest health and safety standards and that the product works as claimed. The product label also specifies how to use a product safely and effectively.

Risks Associated with Homemade Pesticides

Homemade pesticides do not undergo any scientific evaluation and do not have label directions that the user can follow to ensure safe use or the desired pest control result. While some recipes, such as mixtures of soap and water, are not likely to pose human health risks, other recipes may pose health or environmental concerns. For example:

- Recipes that require cooking, such as boiling rhubarb leaves or chrysanthemums to extract toxins, or recipes for extracting nicotine from cigarettes, are potentially dangerous.

- Recipes that include gasoline and kerosene as ingredients may pose health or serious environmental concerns if not handled or disposed of properly.

Other possible risks associated with the preparation and use of homemade pesticides include:

- inhaling harmful fumes
- irritating your eyes and skin
- ingesting contaminants or harmful substances due to improper preparation, labelling, and storage
- contaminating your clothing
- contaminating cookware and utensils normally used to prepare and serve food
- the environmental impact of use and disposal

Minimizing Your Risk

Consider using preventative pest control methods that can reduce or eliminate the need for pesticides. For example, the following lawn maintenance practices can make your lawn more resistant to weed and insect infestations:

- increasing mowing height
- watering deeply
- fertilizing
- raking and spreading grass seed
- aerating

If you choose to use a pesticide, Health Canada encourages the use of products identified as being registered under the *Pest Control Products Act* (PCPA). Registered

pesticides are manufactured in facilities where appropriate measures are taken to protect workers and the environment. In addition, Health Canada reviews all of the available scientific information on the chemicals in these products to ensure that they meet the latest health and safety standards and are effective.

All pesticides registered in Canada will have a PCP registration number on the label. Look for this number when purchasing a pesticide to be sure the product is registered for use in Canada, and always follow all of the instructions on the label.

There are registered pesticides available in stores for use in your home and garden that have ingredients similar to those found in some homemade recipes. Before using any pesticide, check to see if there are local regulations about pesticide use in your area.

Health Canada's Role

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has the mandate to protect human health, safety and the environment by minimizing risks associated with pesticides, while providing Canadians with access to the pest management tools they require for agriculture, forestry, industry, and personal use.

In addition to conducting the pre-registration evaluation of pesticides for safety and effectiveness, the PMRA also monitors pesticide use through a series of education, compliance, and enforcement programs. As part of this work, all registered pesticides are re-evaluated every 15 years, using the latest scientific methods to determine if

they continue to meet Health Canada's health and environmental standards.

Need More Info?

See the following Health Canada Web sections:

Pesticide Use in and Around the Home, at:
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/protect-proteger/use-utiliser/_home-maison/index-eng.php

Healthy Lawns, at:
www.healthcanada.gc.ca/healthylawns

It's Your Health, Healthy Lawns at:
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/environ/lawn-pelouse-eng.php

Pest Notes (provides general information on pest control measures and common household or garden pests), at:
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/pest/_pnotes/index-eng.php

Fact Sheet: The Regulation of Pesticides in Canada, at:
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/pest/_fact-fiche/reg-pesticide/index-eng.php

Or call the Pest Management Information Service at 1-800-267-6315 (toll free in Canada).

For additional articles on health and safety issues go to the It's Your Health Web section at:
www.healthcanada.gc.ca/iyh
 You can also call toll free at 1-866-225-0709 or TTY at 1-800-267-1245*