
6. Household Pesticide Product Label Survey, Analysis and Alternatives

- Objectives:
- To increase awareness of the range of products containing pesticide ingredients, and protective measures that should be taken if pesticide products are used.
 - To increase awareness of possible hazards associated with pesticides and “inert” ingredients not listed on product labels.

Activities:

- Conduct supermarket, hardware and garden store surveys of products containing pesticides as ingredients, including household sprays, fleas collars and bombs, lice shampoos, shower curtains, shelf paper, toilet bowl cleaners and deodorizers, mold and mildew products, moth balls, no-pest strips, pool algicides, weed killers, garden insecticides, moss killers, wood preservatives, paint additives, etc. Alternatively, survey products used in your school or home.
- See how many products you can identify, and analyze labels for active ingredients, inert ingredients, warning statements, etc. Try to answer the questions below.
- Write a class report summarizing your findings, and suggesting alternative products or methods that can be employed to control insects, fungus, odors, etc.

Resources:

- Buy Smart, Buy Safe: A consumers guide to less-toxic products*. 1994. Available from the Washington Toxics Coalition, 4516 University Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105. (206) 632-1545.
- Clean and Green: The complete guide to nontoxic and environmentally safe housekeeping*. Annie Berthold-Bond. 1990. Ceres Press: Woodstock, NY. (914) 679-8561.
- Non-Toxic and Natural*. Debra Lynn Dadd. 1984. Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc.: Los Angeles.
- The Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP), PO Box 1393, Eugene, OR 97440, (541) 344-5044 offers information on active and inert ingredients of pesticide products, including *Inert Alert*, a 15-minute video. Information on inerts is also available on NCAP's Web site at www.pesticide.org/inertspage.html. NCAP also offers information on pesticide hazards and alternative control measures for many pests (www.pesticide.org/factsheets.html).



Questions for Thought:

- 1) How can you tell which household or garden products contain pesticides?
- 2) What do labels tell you about how much of a product to use?
- 3) What do labels tell you about how often a product may be applied? Is it safe to apply a product several times a day or multiple times in one week?
- 4) What are re-entry intervals? How do you think they are established? What factors affect whether it is “safe” to re-enter a room that has been treated with a pesticide product?
- 5) What do labels tell you about acute toxicity? Cancer risks? Risks to pregnant women? Risks to infants or children? Risks to pets? Risks to cancer or AIDS patients?
- 6) What are inert ingredients? What do product labels tell you about them?
- 7) What do the words “Danger,” “Warning,” and “Caution” signify when used on pesticide product labels? Who requires that these words be on the label?