

Important Contact Information

Maryland Poison Center
Operates 24 hours
800-222-1222
www.mdpoison.com

*University of Maryland
Home and Garden Information Center*
800-342-2507
www.hgic.umd.edu

National Pesticide Information Center
Non-emergency information on pesticides
and pesticide use
800-858-7378
www.npic.orst.edu

*Maryland Department of Agriculture,
Pesticide Regulation Section*
Report complaints about commercial
pesticide applicators or pesticide misuse
410-841-5710
www.mda.state.md.us/plants-pests

More Resources on Pesticides

Maryland Pesticide Network
A grassroots coalition of organizations in
Maryland dedicated to protecting health
and the environment from the hazards of
pesticides and promoting solutions for
healthy living
www.mdpestnet.org

Beyond Pesticides
Works with allies in protecting public health
and the environment to lead the transition
to a world free of toxic pesticides
www.beyondpesticides.org

PESTICIDES: Selection, Safe Use and Alternatives

This information is provided to
consumers in accordance with
Chapter 33-B of the Montgomery
County Code

Department of Environmental Protection Montgomery County, MD



255 Rockville Pike, Suite 120
Rockville, MD 20850
240-777-7700
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP

What is a Pesticide?

Pesticides are substances used to prevent, destroy, repel or mitigate the effects of any pest ranging from insects, animals and weeds to microorganisms such as fungi, molds, bacteria and viruses.

Common household products such as flea and tick sprays, powders and pet collars; insect repellents for personal use; kitchen, laundry and bath disinfectants and sanitizers, including bleach; products to kill mold and mildew; and weed control products are considered pesticides.



**Pesticides
in the Home**

Source: Much of the information presented in this fact sheet was adapted from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Maryland Department of Agriculture literature.

Pesticide Regulations

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), and Montgomery County have regulations pertaining to pesticides and pesticide use.

The EPA is responsible for regulating the sale and use of pesticides, and the allowable levels of pesticides in or on food. More information is available on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/pesticides.

The MDA, Pesticide Regulation Section, administers Maryland's Pesticide Applicator's Law, enforces federal laws on the sale and use of pesticides, investigates pesticide accidents or incidents, and consumer complaints on pesticide misuse. The MDA also approves training courses in the handling, storage and use of pesticides, conducts examinations to determine that pesticide applicators are competent to follow prescribed pest control practices, and approves licenses for business pesticide applicators. More information is available in MDA's website at www.mda.state.md.us/plants-pests.

Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers the County's pesticide law (Chapter 33b of the Montgomery County Code), including those provisions requiring that retail sellers of pesticide products provide written material to purchasers that address general pesticide use and safety, and alternatives to pesticides.

Pesticide Alternatives

The most effective method of removing pests is to incorporate practices that prevent the pest problem. Practice these alternatives to pesticide use around your home, lawn, and garden to eliminate and prevent pest problems:

1. Remove sources of food and water in your home
2. Eliminate places where pests may hide inside and outside your home
3. Block pest entry into your home
4. Remove pest breeding sites in your lawn and garden
5. Make sure you take proper care of the plants around your home, lawn, and garden

For more information on pesticide alternatives, go to the EPA website at www.epa.gov/pesticides, or MDA website at www.mda.state.md.us/plants-pests.

Integrated Pest Management

Integrated pest management (IPM) is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management. IPM stresses non-chemical prevention to avoid unacceptable levels of pest damage and protect the public and the environment from the hazard of pesticides. IPM uses a wide variety of the best available pest management strategies, which are both economical and pose the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment.

The IPM approach can be applied to your home, garden, and workplace and takes advantage of all appropriate pest management options, including moderate use of the least-toxic pesticides as a last resort.

Four Steps to Developing an IPM Program

1. Identify the pest problem. Many organisms are harmless or beneficial. Monitor and identify them accurately, so that appropriate control decisions can be made.
2. Prevent the pest problem. Prevent pests from becoming a threat. Manage lawn and crops that are the target of pests, and keep indoor spaces clean and free of debris that provides food and shelter for pests. Seal them out! Caulk and seal all cracks and crevices, and install sweeps on doors. Mice can enter your home through a gap as small as ¼ inch under a doorway.
3. Evaluate the effective options. If pest control is needed, and preventive methods are no longer effective or available, then evaluate methods for effectiveness and risks. Choose less risky non-chemical pest controls first, including highly targeted products such as pheromones to disrupt pest reproductive cycles, or mechanical controls, such as trapping or weeding. If lower risk controls do not work, then apply least toxic pesticides in a targeted manner.
4. Evaluate the results. Monitor your environment after treating the problem. Consider these criteria when evaluating your results: (1) compare the pre-treatment situation with the post-treatment conditions and determine if there was a difference; and (2) consider the pros and cons of a short-term solution using chemical treatments against long-term preventative methods.

Additional IPM Information

The following resources provide detailed information on IPM:

University of Maryland, College of Agriculture & Natural Resources
www.agnr.umd.edu/Extension/agriculture/IPM/

IPM Institute of North America
www.ipminstitute.org



Disposing of Pesticides

Pesticides are considered hazardous waste. Proper disposal is essential to prevent contamination of the environment. Never dispose of pesticides in a sink drain, on the ground, or in a storm drain or stream. To assist with disposal of pesticide related products, Montgomery County has a staffed household hazardous waste receiving area (open 9 am - 5 pm, Sunday through Saturday) at the Shady Grove Solid Waste Transfer Station, in addition to conveniently located satellite collections. Information on household hazardous waste collection in the County is at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hazardouswaste.

Commercial Pesticide Applicators

If you choose to hire a business to apply pesticides to your lawn, make certain the applicator is licensed by the MDA, follows all safety precautions, and notifies you each time pesticides are applied to your lawn. MDA has strict guidelines on the type of information a licensed applicator must give to each customer about the pesticide they are applying to a lawn. When the applicator is applying the pesticide, make sure all cooking utensils, toys, pet items, sports equipment, lawn furniture, and other similar items are removed from the area and keep adults, children, and pets from standing in and around the area being treated. It is your right as a consumer to be completely informed about the control method the pesticide applicator is using. Do not hesitate to ask for technical information on the pesticide! For more information on consumer awareness about pesticide applicators, go to MDA website at www.mda.state.md.us/plants-pests.

