



Arizona Department of Agriculture

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PRESS RELEASE ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

RELEASE DATE: October 1, 2010

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Pay Attention to Pesticides

Cooler nights may be nicer for people, but our native Arizona species like the change too. Six-legged insects, eight-legged spiders or no-legged snakes often make their way closer to people with the change in season. Depending on where you are in the state, these pests may be coming into your home for warmth or just hanging out on the warm, concrete driveway.

As people begin fighting back against the pests, the Arizona Department of Agriculture starts to receive complaints about improper use of pesticides. (Pesticide is a general term used to cover herbicides, rodenticides, insecticides...etc.)

As the Department begins looking into these, it is finding that the public is being given incorrect information through the media, homeowner newsletters, master gardeners, etc. To help provide some clarification and a good resource, ADA has issued the following guidance:

- Pesticide labels should be read **5 times** as you are required by law to follow the label directions – the label is the law. Read the label before purchasing, before

mixing, before applying, before storing and before disposing.

- Pesticides can only be used on the sites specified on the label. A “site” is the intended application location – i.e., lettuce in garden, toilet bowl, gopher hole, etc. Although someone may tell you to use something as basic as moth balls to keep snakes away, it is illegal and can cause environmental harm. Moth balls are only registered for indoor use.
- It is alright to use a pesticide against a pest not identified on the label as long as the label does not prohibit you from doing so. However, one thing to carefully consider is whether the pesticide will control the pest which isn't on the label. For instance, if a label says, “For the control of red ants at their ant hills” and you have black ants, you could legally use the product to control black ants at their anthills.

Pesticide Use – Follow the Label - It is Important – It is the Law

- If you are paying someone to apply a pesticide for you, make sure they are knowledgeable about what they are doing. This is normally done through certification or licensure through either the [Arizona Department of Agriculture](#) or the [Office of Pest Management](#). Certification or licensure is normally obtained through showing competency in passing an examination related to pesticide use and the associated legal requirements. So although someone may offer to do it for less, not only is it contrary to law, if they do it improperly and expose pets and people, it may end up costing more in the long run.
- If you ever have concerns about pesticide use, the first place to start is with the applicator or business. They can explain to you what has been applied and can serve as a good source of information to address your concerns. Their jobs depend on doing it right. Therefore, they should try and do their best to ensure your concerns are addressed and all questions answered.
- If talking with the applicator does not satisfy your questions, you can contact the state. For pesticide use around homes or structures by pest control operators, the Office of Pest Management should be contacted at 602-255-3664. For use in an agricultural setting, contact the Arizona Department of Agriculture at either 602-542-0901 or 800-423-8876. Answers are freely given to questions relating to pesticide use.
- What will happen if you feel something was done improperly which requires government interaction? One of the agencies will investigate to determine if pesticides were applied properly. If the investigation identifies improper use, normally a citation is issued to the violating party, along with a penalty, which when paid, goes to the state general fund. Something to remember: Once started, an investigation does not stop until it is complete.
- If you would like to learn more about reading the label and proper pesticides use go to: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/kids/hometour/label/read.htm> or do an internet search for pesticide education and you will find many links to pesticide safety information.