

ECO-FRIENDLY PEST SOLUTIONS

Being good stewards of our earth does not mean surrendering our gardens to predatory insects; good gardening habits can ensure the safety and vibrancy of our plants without compromising the future of our planet. Responsible pest control begins with understanding the problems that can afflict your landscape. You must know the specifics of your plants to understand the key problems you might expect. Many problems can be avoided altogether though. Through good culture, through knowing the needs of your plant: by choosing the right planting location, by preparing the soil, and by ensuring it gets the right nutrition, air and water it requires, sickness in plants can be prevented.

If, through research and after consulting a Stauffer's professional, you have determined that an insect is the cause of your plants' problems, then use of a pesticide is advantageous. The pesticides on our prescription sheets are ranked from least toxic to most toxic (using LD50). The rule of thumb is to start with the least toxic chemical that you feel will do the job, if it isn't sufficient, simply work down the list. To find the pesticide that's right for you, you must coordinate several things: each pesticide is labeled to control a specific problem, and each pest has a certain stage in its life that it is most vulnerable to a pesticide. Also, the chemicals we have in our stores today have a much shorter residual life span on the plant than the old toxic ones. This is good for the environment, but it means you have to target specific pests to do a good job. By using our prescription sheets, you can figure out what pesticide to use and when you must use it.

In order to avoid phytotoxicity, an adverse reaction or injury to the plant resulting from the pesticide and evident by yellowing or brown spotting or browning of the edges, you must follow these steps:

- Read the label to see if your plant is known to be sensitive.
- Use the exact amount designated on the label, spraying to runoff.
- Do not treat a plant that is under any kind of stress such as from drought or planting.
- Wait for new growth to harden off before treating it with a pesticide.
- Do not apply a chemical when the temperature will be over 90°, when the plant is in full, hot sun, or when the humidity is over 90%. Apply the pesticide to a dry plant.

Certain caution needs to be taken when you are spraying more delicate plants. If you are going to spray a vegetable or an edible fruit, be sure they are listed on the insecticide's label. Take care to see the recommended days to harvest. Further, we DO NOT recommend spraying flowering plants with insecticides because of probable injury to bees. If you need to spray the plant, do so when the bees are not active, in the early morning or in the evening. Sprays can also harm flowers, so try to keep the pesticide away from them. Bees are crucial to the pollination of our crops; our food supply exists because of them. Take care of our bees.

Before applying the pesticide, you must first make sure you are protected. Cover your arms with long sleeves, cover your legs with pants that overlap your shoes, wear a hat, and have gloves on. Be sure to keep the chemical from coming into contact with your skin and eyes. Mix only enough for the job to be done—using all the mixture--do not pour leftovers onto the ground! Choose a windless day to spray, if there is a slight breeze, be sure it is at your back. When using soaps and oils, very thorough coverage of the plant is needed because they kill only those insects that they come into direct contact with. Spray under the leaves as well as on top. Spray thoroughly and evenly and if you take care, the insects will be properly killed. The low level insecticides will not kill insects that come along later - making them safe for our environment. Sometimes it may be necessary to use a more persistent chemical to save your plant. When done, store the pesticide in a shaded, dry area that is not subject to freezing or excessively high heat. The chemicals do have a shelf life and will not be effective if they are old.

Being considerate of the earth and having a garden that thrives go hand in hand. All it takes is informed, responsible care. There are a lot of things to consider though, and your local Stauffer's of Kissel Hill will help guide you towards the product that's right for you. It is our mission to make you a successful, eco-friendly gardener.

READ THE LABEL BEFORE USING A PESTICIDE