

Fertilizers and Pesticides

Agricultural chemicals fall into specific categories, depending on their purpose or method of application.

Fertilizers and pesticides are essential to modern agriculture and turf management, but if used incorrectly, they can cause economic loss, sickness and even death. The skull and crossbones symbol is required by law to be on the label of all toxic pesticides, since the greatest hazards lie in the failure to follow precautions and directions for safe use, or in unexpected accidents such as the bursting of spray hoses, rusting containers, or improper storage and cleanup procedures.



- When working with toxic chemicals, use respirators, gloves and eye protection as indicated by the manufacturer. Bathe and change clothes when you have completed the work.
- A standard lawn or crop fertilizer is a relatively safe product. Multipurpose products such as lawn fertilizer and weed killer combinations are less toxic than other pesticides.
- Organophosphate pesticides destroy important enzymes in your nervous system without producing symptoms. Ill effects also result from swallowing, breathing, or having skin or eye contact with pesticides. Skin absorption is the most common offender and is difficult to treat.
- Pesticides should be handled in well-ventilated areas and stored in their original, labeled containers--never in food or drink containers. Liquid pesticides should be stored in heated areas to prevent freezing. Do not store volatile weedkillers or related herbicides with other "wetable" powders, dusts or seeds.
- Unidentified pesticides should be discarded, but never into a sewage system or street gutter that drains into open water, or into areas where soil, crops or animals will be contaminated.

- Never mix pesticides or drain a sprayer near a well, pond or stream, and be careful when burning empty pesticide containers--the smoke can be hazardous to all living organisms.
- To minimize the drift of pesticides, apply them on a calm day. Under windy conditions, the pesticide could blow or splash back into your face while you're mixing or pouring it

