

Pest infestations are a common occurrence in the lawn and garden but treatment for such infestations involves several steps before rushing out and purchasing the latest and hottest chemical product on the market.

It may be that after carefully assessing the situation, you come to the realization that the pest can be eliminated without the need for chemicals. This is, of course, the ideal scenario since in addition to being a potential health hazard if used improperly, pesticides are a major contributor to stormwater pollution.

Once released into the environment, all it takes is a little rain and soon the chosen product is no longer doing wonders on your lawn but is, instead, flowing through the storm drain en route to the nearest body of water. Once there, it poses a potential threat to not only fish and other wildlife, but also humans.

So play it safe with pesticides and use them only as a last resort and only according to the manufacturer's directions for safe use and disposal of the product.

What is a Pesticide?

The word "pesticide" is a general term, which refers to any substance or blend of substances that destroys pests or prevents them from causing damage.

There are many types of pesticides: insecticides control insects, fungicides control fungi, rodenticides control rodents, herbicides control weeds and so forth.

Pest Control Tactics

- ◆ The first step in controlling pests is to identify the intruder. If assistance is needed in this process, consult the county Extension Agent, a garden center or the library.
- ◆ The next step is to determine if the potential threat from the pests demands further action.
- ◆ Thirdly, seek expert advice on ways to handle the pest without using chemicals. It may be as simple as pulling a few weeds, removing an occasional insect by hand from the garden, introducing a beneficial insect to the mix, or a particular planting that repels unwanted insects.
- ◆ Once the pest is identified and the proper control method is determined, proceed to rid your home and/or garden of the intruder.

If Chemicals are Necessary

If possible, use non-toxic alternatives. Most lawn care/garden centers carry non-toxic products and remember that the best pesticide is one that provides the maximum reduction of the pest while causing the least amount of damage to the environment.

- ◆ Follow directions carefully as given on the product label.
- ◆ Use only the amount needed for the job.

- ◆ Don't use when there is a chance of rain. The rainwater will wash away all of your hard work and send the chemicals straight to the nearest stream, creek or river.
- ◆ Also avoid using pesticides on windy days since the possibility of the product being transported to a nearby waterway is much greater.

Storage of Pesticides

Pesticides should be stored in a secure location, out of the reach of children and pets and away from food. They should always be stored in their original containers so as to avoid potential misuse or possible harm if later, unknowingly, handled in an improper manner.

Disposing of Pesticides

- ◆ Follow proper procedure and use only the amount needed for the job and disposal will be less of a problem.
- ◆ Try giving leftover pesticides to your friends and neighbors or donate them to a community or religious organization that may benefit from their use.
- ◆ Never throw leftover pesticides in the trash. Once the container is empty and thoroughly cleaned it may be placed in the trash and disposed of at the landfill.
- ◆ Never pour leftover pesticides down the storm sewer or, for that matter, even an indoor drain.

Pesticide Alternatives

Below are a number of alternative solutions to controlling insects in the home and garden. Granted, some of them may not work as well as commercial pesticides. Nevertheless, the potential benefits make at least trying them a worthwhile endeavor. For more information on alternative pest control measures, consult your county Extension Agent, a knowledgeable nursery worker or library. And, don't forget the abundance of information available on the internet, which is where many of these methods were discovered.

- ◆ **Fleas:** Feed pets garlic tablets, vitamin B or brewers yeast.
- ◆ **Aphids:** Spray plants with soapy water and rinse after aphids have died. Plant garlic, chives, petunias and nasturtiums in the garden and try introducing ladybugs or lacewings.
- ◆ **Cutworms:** Sink paper cups (with bottoms removed) around seedlings to block cutworms.
- ◆ **Flies:** Set bowls of mint sprigs or ground basil leaves where flies enter home.
- ◆ **Moths:** Place cedar blocks, small bags of dried lemon peels, dried lavender, bay leaves, whole cloves, dried rosemary, mint, or whole peppercorns with clothes.



CITY OF BEAUMONT STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

For more information, contact:
City of Beaumont
Public Works Department
(409) 880-3725

Pesticides

*A Guide to the Safe and
Responsible Use of Pesticides in
the Home & Garden*

