

EPA Curbs Dursban Uses

Barb Ogg
Extension Educator

The Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 has claimed its first victim: Dursban, (chlorpyrifos) an organophosphate insecticide.

Dow AgroSciences has reached a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to voluntarily withdraw chlorpyrifos from most uses in and around residences. Dow AgroSciences will begin monitoring a plan to deplete the existing supplies of chlorpyrifos and remove it from distribution.

Chlorpyrifos is the active ingredient in Dursban and Lorsban insecticides and is also marketed under other trade names. Hundreds of products contain chlorpyrifos.

Why has the EPA taken this step?

The EPA is concerned about exposure of children to chlorpyrifos. Of the 20-24 million pounds of chlorpyrifos used each year, about 50 percent of this insecticide is used in and around the home. This act will eliminate the use of chlorpyrifos by homeowners, limiting uses to certified, professional, or agricultural applicators. The EPA will also lower the toler-

ance on apples and grapes and eliminate its use on tomatoes—foods posing the greatest risk to children.

Will this action affect agricultural uses of chlorpyrifos in Nebraska? The agricultural use of chlorpyrifos is sold under the trade name, Lorsban. This action will have little or no effect on current agricultural uses on Nebraska crops, but



future restrictions may occur.

How do I know if the insecticide I have has chlorpyrifos in it? Each insecticide label contains information and gives the "active ingredients" in the product. Some products that are marketed under other trade names may contain chlorpyrifos.

During the summer month, I have been spraying around the outside of my house with Dursban to keep bugs out. What can I use after Dursban is no longer available? We don't

recommend routine spraying of insecticides as a preventative, because most of the time, homeowners are spraying for a problem that doesn't exist. This routine and widespread use of Dursban is part of reason why the EPA has taken this action. We recommend that homeowners maintain the outside of their home in such a way as to discourage insects near the structure and fix cracks and crevices that will allow entry by small insects. If an insect invasion occurs, actions can be taken at that time to eliminate the problem. These actions can include pesticides, but many times least toxic controls can be used to solve the pest problem.

What can I do if I find a product containing chlorpyrifos in my garage or basement? It makes the most sense to use up the product, as directed on the label. If you decide it is a product you no longer want to use, you can take it to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection, sponsored by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. The next collection will be held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on, Saturday, July 29 at the Nebraska Wesleyan University parking lot, 56th and Huntington Street.

Be Good to Your Worms

Often earthworms leave small mounds or clumps of granular soil scattered about in the lawn or garden, which are called "castings." These castings may be a nuisance when they accumulate.

As earthworms tunnel through the soil, they ingest the soil and drag organic matter into their burrows where it is broken down. Although earthworms are the most numerous in the top six inches, they also work in the subsoil, bringing mineral rich soil from below to the surface. This adds to the supply of nutrients available to the plants. Research shows in 100 square feet of garden soil, earthworms may bring four to eight pounds

of dirt to the soil surface each year.

Besides incorporating organic matter to your soil, earthworms are good manufacturers of fertilizer. Castings have organic matter levels much higher than the surrounding soil and significant levels of nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium and many micronutrients in a form that all plants can use. For example, a 200 square foot garden with a low worm population of only five worms per cubic foot will provide over 35 pounds (about 1/3 pound per worm) of top-grade fertilizer each garden year.

Not only do they produce this fertilizer, but spread it

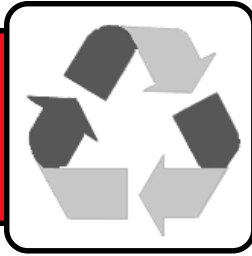


thoroughly within the top 12 inches of soil and incorporate it as far down as six feet. Soil that is well managed, rich in humus, may easily support 25 worms per cubic foot, which translates into at least 175 pounds of fertilizer per year for the same 200 square foot garden.

This means your garden or lawn can be supplied with far more fertilizer of superior

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Environmental Focus



Money Saving Techniques to Help Save the Environment

Dina Bertolini
P3 Intern

The new buzzword in technology is "pollution prevention." Pollution prevention isn't cleaning up the oil spills in the Atlantic or recovering toxic spills in old waste dump areas. The idea behind pollution prevention is much like the ideas behind car maintenance, the need for continuous updates on a systems performance. Many times, just like car maintenance, pollution prevention saves money, either directly or indirectly, because it prevents unnecessary wastes from being generated and keeps companies and businesses updated with new technologies.

Pollution Prevention (P2) is, in essence, waste minimization. P2 is the practice of following the order of reduce, reuse, and recycle as a guideline in industrial or company applications. These P2 guidelines save money, but are environmentally friendly. Examples are replacing incandescent lights with fluorescent fixtures in a heavily lighted office building or posting a sign in hotel bathrooms asking patrons to leave clean towels hung so they won't be washed if they're not dirty. If all recommendations such as these were implemented, businesses in the Nebraska area could have reduced over 6.5 million pounds of land-filled solid wastes and have saved over \$650,000 through the Partners in Pollution Prevention program.

There are many free public

opportunities available to learn how to implement pollution prevention practices. One particular program, Partners in Pollution Prevention (P3), has been offered every summer since 1997. This year, twelve student interns will apply their backgrounds in engineering disciplines to offer free services to the Nebraska area from May 22 to

August 8. The students assist businesses by providing money-saving techniques and suggestions, and also provide information to businesses so they can remain economically competi-

tive in our present, rapidly changing technological world. A simple example would be helping a dry cleaning business that uses hazardous chemicals change to a cleaning process that uses carbon dioxide gas.

Presently there is a P3 intern working through the Lancaster County Extension office. Dina Bertolini is from Iowa State University completing a double major in Civil Engineering with an environmental emphasis and a major in Environmental Science within the next school year. She will be providing free services for small businesses ranging from three to one hundred employees and outreach activities for P2 education.

If any organization would like more information on P2 presentations, assessment services for P2 practices, or basic information can contact Dina Bertolini (for Lincoln area) (402) 441-7180 or Dr. Woldt (for any Nebraska area) at (402) 472-8656.



Misplaced Wildlife Become Problems in Urban Areas

Problem wildlife are animals in the wrong place at the wrong time. Although these animals may seem annoying when in your neighborhood, most don't pose a threat and measures can be taken to keep them away.

Raccoons, opossums, squirrels, bats, rabbits, snakes, and skunks are the most common problem wildlife that can invade anywhere.

Many factors can contribute to a wildlife population increase, even in urban areas. A depression in the fur market has reduced the mortality factor for raccoons, and humans are ex-

panding residential districts into areas that were once wildlife habitats affecting other animals. Also, humans provide food and cover that will attract animals.

Wild animals in urban areas often seek food or shelter in porches, chimneys, and garages. Dog and cat food left outside or garbage cans with food in them, can lure the animals.

Eliminate these sources of food or shelter. Feed dogs or cats only one to two times a day, and make sure all food is eaten. Put garbage cans lids on tightly. Use steel or plastic containers with a tight seal.

If bats or squirrels seek

shelter in chimneys, cap them with a cover that allows smoke to go out but prevents the animals from getting in. Keep garage doors closed. Screen underneath porches with woven wire or wood lattice for a more attractive look.

If the problem persists, professional pest control operators can be found in the phone book and, for a fee, will come to a home to resolve the problem.

Live traps may be rented from a local humane society or municipal animal control office. These entities will pick up some trapped animals, particularly those that can transmit rabies.

Traps also can be bought at most hardware stores.

If an animal is encountered, be alert for abnormal behavior. Raccoon or skunk activity during the day is considered abnormal behavior because they are nocturnal animals. Don't take chances of contracting rabies. If you do see a skunk or raccoon walking in the yard during the day, contact your local sheriff's department and the local public health department. Tell the officer where the animal is. They should respond. Pets and children should be taken inside.

Beware of handling wild animals due to a risk of rabies,

especially in raccoons and skunks. If a person is bitten, wash the wound immediately because the virus is transmitted through saliva, and contact a physician. The offending animal should be captured, killed, and the intact head submitted to the state public health department for rabies testing. If shooting the animal, don't shoot it in the head.

Although some danger may exist in wildlife, they can be enjoyed by all as long as we can prevent and control the problems they may cause.

SOURCE: Scott Hygnstrom, Ph.D., wildlife specialist, NU/IANR. (BPO)