

Important Fact Sheet for Maine School Garden Managers and Volunteers

Every school garden program in the state of Maine that is planning to apply products for control of weeds, insects, animals or plant diseases (pesticides) must have a staff member licensed as a Commercial Master Pesticide Applicator and a licensed applicator on site whenever pest management products are used.

State law since 1988 has required applicators of pesticides to areas open to the public, like school gardens, to be licensed to apply ANY pesticide with few exceptions. Please visit the link below to learn about the exam and licensing process:
<http://www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/cert/exams.htm#master>.

A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances (**even homemade mixtures**) that is applied in an effort to mitigate or kill any pest, and a pest in the garden is a pathogen (disease), weed, insect or animal that you don't want to be there. A few examples of pesticide products are shown on the back of this fact sheet.

Anything used in a school garden to control, suppress or repel pests, **even if it is natural or organic**, is a pesticide. The license is required for any staff member or official volunteer that will be applying these substances. Students should not be allowed to apply any pest control products.

The steps to get a license include requesting study guides from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension (more information can be found on the site link above) and submitting an application to be scheduled for an exam appointment with the Board of Pesticide Control (BPC). The application can be found at
http://www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/pdf/commercial_exam_app.pdf

WHY LICENSE?

Pesticides are important tools which, in the hands of a skilled applicator, offer numerous benefits. Increased crop yields, safer highways, enhanced landscapes and infestation-free structures are just a few.

But pesticides may also have negative impacts on food safety and consumer confidence.

As with any powerful tool, proper and effective use depends upon the judgment of the applicator. An educated applicator will likely produce a safer product. They will also have knowledge of existing rules that apply when growers use pesticides, e.g., recordkeeping, protective clothing, worker protection and label compliance.

The pesticide applicator license represents recognition of an individual's qualifications to use these tools properly.

If you have questions about the licensing process, please contact Gary Fish at the BPC 287-2731 or gary.fish@maine.gov.



These are pesticides?

- Disinfectants & bleaches



- Herbicides



- Rat & mouse baits



- Fungicides



No endorsement intended or implied

These are pesticides?

- Insecticides



- Botanicals



- Biological controls



No endorsement intended or implied

These are pesticides?

- Deer and rabbit repellents



- Consumer products used to manage pests



- Also includes homemade products

No endorsement intended or implied

HOMEMADE ORGANIC PESTICIDE RECIPES AND NATURAL REMEDIES

There are lots of organic pesticides now available at lawn and garden centres, but many can be made easily at home. While these natural mixtures are biodegradable, use them sparingly, since they will kill the good bugs such as spiders and ladybugs, along with the bad ones.

Rhubarb insecticide
Boil 500 grams of rhubarb leaves in a few pints of water for about 20 minutes, allow to cool, then strain the liquid into a suitable container. Add some dish detergent or soap flakes (not laundry detergent) and spray on leaves to kill off all kinds of bugs like aphids and spider mites. * NOTE: Rhubarb leaves contain high amounts of oxalic acid. If ingested, your heart will stop and you will die. * Honey, because more sticky.