



Pesticide Questions or Concerns?

Ever wondered what precautions to take if you have young children at home and need to hire an exterminator, which lawn care products are safest for pets, or whether a pesticide stored in your garden shed for years is still safe to use?

The National Pesticide Telecommunications Network (NPTN), a joint initiative of Oregon State University and the US Environmental Protection Agency, offers both a toll-free information line and a comprehensive, easy-to-navigate website that provide objective, science-based answers to questions about pesticides and pesticide-related topics.

The information line, 1-800-858-7378, is staffed Monday through Friday, 6:30 AM - 4:30 PM, Pacific Time. NPTN employs 12 full-time specialists with advanced degrees in areas such as plant pathology, entomology and biotechnology, all of whom have received an additional year of training in toxicology.

In addition, the service maintains a staff physician specializing in clinical toxicology to answer non-emergency questions concerning pesticides and human health. People who call with emergencies can be connected directly with an appropriate Poison Control Center or state agency.

NPTN's website: <http://www.ace.orst.edu/info/nptn/> is slick, fast and user-friendly, with links to vast amounts of general and technical information, including detailed fact sheets on specific pesticides, technical databases and a list of pesticide manufacturers. NPTN pulls its material from a variety of sources, including EPA documents, Cooperative Extension publications, current scientific literature and pesticide product databases.

The site has many excellent features, including its site map, a big, simple chart with text links to information in seven categories. Clicking on the homepage "Pest Control" button brings you to consumer information on choosing and hiring a pest control firm and links to various common household pests that typically require help from a licensed applicator.

The "Regulatory" section offers links to EPA, federal laws and regulations and Canadian pesticide regulation, as well as links to all 50 state pesticide regulatory agencies, applicator training coordinators and health departments.

The NPTN search engine is fast and excellent. Type in almost any insect, plant disease or pesticide; any pesticide or any state, if you're looking for regulatory information, and the search yields numerous links to government sites, Extension sites and research databases.

A hot topics section in the center of the NPTN's homepage features links to various pest-related issues that are making news.

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