

Read the label!!!

*Pamela Corle-Bennett
Ohio State University Extension – Clark County
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Have you ever read completely through a pesticide label prior to using it in your landscape? I agree that reading labels or the directions for your new appliance or your new cell phone is not fun. We skim these materials at best, right?

Reading a pesticide label, however, can make the difference between the product working and failure. It can be the difference between protecting the honeybees and killing them. It may even be the difference between using a chemical or not even needing one.

The pesticide product label is one of the most important tools to ensure safe and effective use of pesticides. This label is required of pesticide manufacturers and provides directions on mixing, application, storage and disposal of the product.

The pesticide label is the law and is a legal document meant to be followed exactly as the directions state.

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency reviews and approves all language for labels. They are all consistent and all must contain specific required information.

The front of the label has the trade, brand, or product name shown plainly. This name is used to advertise the product.

Following this, there is an ingredient statement. This provides the amount of active ingredients in the product. The active ingredient is the name of the chemical that the manufacturer claims to have an effect on the target pest.

It also contains the amount of other ingredients or inert ingredients. These ingredients help to deliver the chemical or to formulate the final product into something that is useable.

Extension resources often recommend the chemical name for a specific pest problem. Therefore, you need to be aware of what to look for on a pesticide label.

For instance, carbaryl is a product recommended to kill squash vine borers, common problem in zucchini and other squash plants. Carbaryl is the name to look for under active ingredients and can be found in products such as Sevin Concentrate and Bayer Advanced Complete Insect Killer and many more.

Now, when you find carbaryl on a label, it is also critical that there are directions for use. Under this heading you find the crop or site that the product is intended to protect. Therefore, in the example above, the insect (squash vine borer) and the site (vegetable garden) is stated.

Important information also included on the label focuses on protecting pollinators. The label will give specific information if you need to know about using it if there is an issue with honeybees, fish, wildlife, etc.

Many more items are required on the label. They are there for a reason.

Through this column, I try to help you reduce the use of pesticides as much as possible. Alternatively, if pesticides are necessary, I try to make sure you are identifying the problem and selecting the most efficient pesticide and to minimize the environmental impact.

Familiarize yourself with the pesticide label so that you can protect both yourself and the environment.