

DISPOSING OF CHEMICAL CONTAINERS RESPONSIBLY REDUCES HAZARDOUS WASTE

You've killed some weeds, and now it's time to throw the empty chemical container in the trash. Right?

While it seems logical, this may not be the best idea. Any remaining chemical in the container could leak and potentially react with other trash contents, or the trash bag could tear, and the chemical could leach into the ground when in the landfill, or simply drip into the sewer drain by the dumpster.

Disposal of chemical containers is an important part of the pesticide application process and should not be overlooked.

What is a chemical container?

When thinking of a chemical container, many of us picture the trigger bottle of Roundup used to treat dandelions in the driveway. Chemical containers can range from larger 2.5 gallon jugs of herbicide to cans of wasp spray, mice bait, and even flea and tick collars for pets. These products are pesticides and considered hazardous waste.

Proper disposal instructions can be found on the container or label. The safety data sheet (SDS) is another resource to determine disposal methods as this document

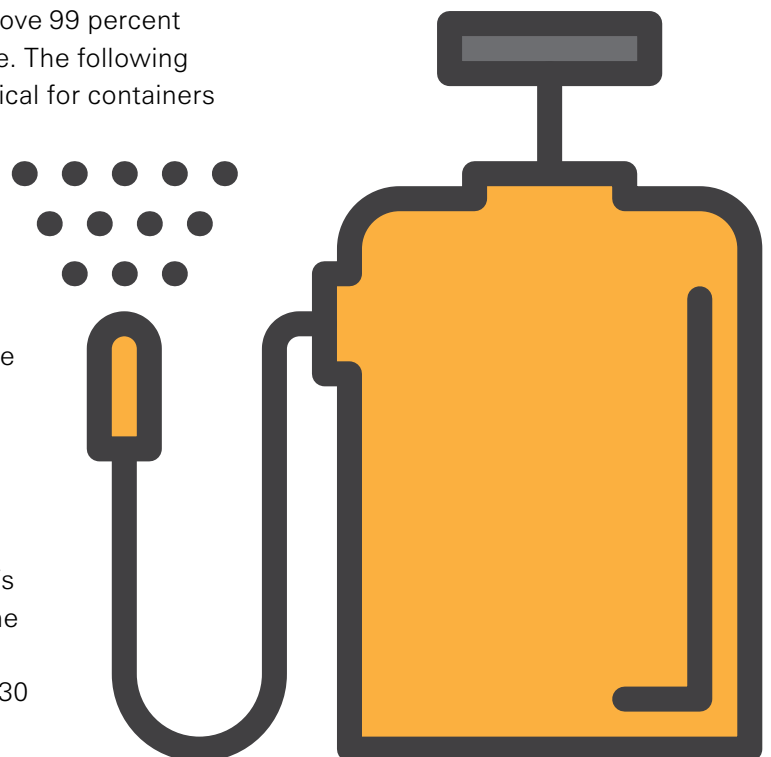
contains more specific information regarding environmental impacts of the product. The SDS can be found through various online resources, but make sure the product registration number on the container matches the document found online.

Triple-rinsing, a necessary step

Most plastic containers are required by the label, and thus the Environmental Protection Agency, to be triple-rinsed since doing so correctly can remove 99 percent of product residue. The following directions are typical for containers that are 2.5 gallons or smaller (large containers, such as drums and totes, may have separate procedures). Begin the triple-rinse process by emptying the container into the pesticide sprayer's tank by holding the container upside down for at least 30 seconds or when

liquid is no longer dripping. Then fill the container one-quarter full with clean water. Close the container securely and shake in all directions for 30 seconds. Empty the container again into the spray tank and hold upside down for 30 seconds. Repeat these steps two more times.

Pressure rinsing using a specialized tool is another option for small, plastic containers. Again, hold the container upside down over



the spray tank. Force the tip of the pressure nozzle through the lower portion of the container on the side closest to the handle. The pressure needs to be at least 40 pounds per square inch and sprayed into the container for at least 30 seconds.

After rinsing is completed, puncture the container so it cannot be reused and dispose of in the trash or recycling in accordance with local regulations. The label, if detachable, and lid need to be removed prior to disposal. Be sure to wear necessary personal protective equipment during all of these steps.

The water in the spray tank is called rinsate and should be applied to a labeled site (the patch of weeds initially sprayed) rather than down the drain. Consult the label and/

or SDS for disposal instructions for containers such as drums, aerosols, or baits. More information can also be found in this UW Extension bulletin: bit.ly/properrinse.

What should you do with other products?

Failure to properly dispose of chemical containers can have lasting impacts. Burying containers may lead to leaching, which might contaminate various water sources. Burning is also not recommended as the pesticide and/or plastic may emit harmful by-products.

Despite our best efforts, sometimes products don't get used completely and may sit in the garage or shed for a few years. These chemicals are best disposed of at

a hazardous waste collection day. Several counties, cities, and private entities hold events that specialize in chemical waste.

Certain collection events may even accept motor oil, antifreeze, batteries, paints, fuels, etc. Contact your local trash collection agency, conservation district, or weed and pest office for details and options in your area.

For more information, contact your local weed and pest control district. See bit.ly/weedandpestoffices.

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