

Safe Pest Control at Home

Prevent pests and keep your family safe from toxic chemicals

A factsheet from Toxic Free NC

Pesticides are poisons. Avoid using them whenever you can. If you decide that you must use a pesticide, always choose the least-toxic product, and use only as much as you need for the job.

Kids are more sensitive to pesticides. Exposure to pesticides can cause miscarriage and birth defects. Kids exposed to pesticides early in life are more likely to develop asthma and learning disorders.



Pesticides break down very slowly when they are applied inside your house. Pesticides applied outdoors can come inside as particles in the air, they can be tracked in from your lawn on shoes or on your pets' fur, and they can come inside on contaminated work clothing.

Remember that many “pests” are actually harmless, and some are very valuable to humans. Bees, spiders, dandelions, and others are part of our environment, but pesticides disrupt our environment and can harm our health.



Follow this simple checklist to prevent pest infestations in your home & garden and keep your family safe from toxic chemicals:

Indoors

- Install and repair screens on windows & doors.
- Seal cracks around windows and doors with caulk or weather-stripping.
- Inspect groceries and used furniture for insects before bringing them home.
- Trim plants and shrubs to keep them at least one foot away from the building.
- Remove piles of scrap wood, mulch, or leaves from around the outside of the house.
- Clean up all spills and messes.
- Empty trash daily.
- Don't leave dirty dishes out.
- Store all food (including pet food) in pest-proof containers with tightfitting lids.
- Clean out grease and crumbs from your kitchen regularly.
- Repair leaky pipes and plumbing.

Lawn & Garden

- Remove or drain buckets, old tires, or any other objects that can hold standing water.
- Use mulch in your flower beds to stop weeds.
- Plant naturally pest-resistant grass in the early fall.
- Mow your lawn regularly at a height of 2 1/2 to 3 inches.
- Use organic fertilizers like compost in the spring and fall.
- Cut down tall weeds, brush or grass from around the building and dispose of the clippings.
- Clean out gutters often, and make sure that water is draining away from the house.