

Safe Spraying Practices

By Siri Amrit Kaur Khalsa

- 1) Always read the label, before you buy the product and EACH TIME before you use it. Don't assume that you remember the proper dilution instructions. Make certain that the product is labeled effective for the use you want to put it to, e.g., be it labeled for the specific pest you have, or the disease you want to treat.
- 2) Only buy as much as you expect to use for the season. Many products lose effectiveness when stored for several years. Buying a large quantity to save money and then not using it only increases disposal problems for hazardous materials.
- 3) Always store hazardous materials in their original packages and in a locked, secure cabinet. There have been tragedies when poisons have been stored in soda pop bottles and small children have gotten a hold of them.
- 4) Fungicides do not work on insects, and insecticides do not work on diseases.
- 5) Only mix as much as you intend to use that day. Don't make a huge batch in advance to use later, as it will also lose effectiveness. Do not dump extra material out in one spot; instead spray it out over an area.
- 6) Do not combine chemicals unless they are labeled as safe to combine.
- 7) ALWAYS suit-up in protective clothing. 85% of chemical exposures occur from the palms of the hands to the elbows, and from absorption through the tear ducts. The pores on your palms are very open compared to the rest of your body. So always wear a mask rated for pesticides (not a paper mask), eye protection, and good rubber gloves, even if it is hot and uncomfortable. Suit-up while you are mixing, in case you have a spill.
- 8) Never stand over your sprayer while you are pumping or using it. If it explodes you can be seriously injured.
- 9) Always rinse and clean your sprayer after use. Never use a herbicide in a sprayer that you intend to use for fertilizer or plant sprays. Herbicide residue can seriously damage your roses. Have a separate sprayer labeled "For Herbicide Use Only".
- 10) Shower immediately after spraying and wash your clothes immediately in a separate laundry load. Rinse them twice.