

# Pesticide Use

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## Benefits

If not properly managed, pests can affect our quality of life in many different ways. Pests can represent a threat to public health and the environment as well as create significant negative impacts to the economy if they are not efficiently controlled.

Pesticides are products that are developed to control, destroy or inhibit the activities of pests. Some pesticide products are available for domestic use, while a larger number are available for commercial and restricted uses. All pesticide products are highly regulated at all levels of government.

## Problems

Pesticides can cause serious environmental problems. Many pesticides are toxic to aquatic life. They can devastate rivers, lakes and groundwater if they are used carelessly or not disposed of properly. Scientists have linked declining numbers of farmland birds to the use of pesticides in intensive farming over the last 50 years.

Pesticides can also contaminate drinking water supplies. It costs water companies many millions every year to remove pesticide residues from drinking water, and these costs are passed onto customers.

## Solutions

To limit the use of pesticides, there are various methods to effectively control pests and prevent infestations. In order to reduce or eliminate the need for pesticide use, you can:

- Answer the question: Do I really have a pest problem?
- Understand pest behaviour;
- Modify your physical environment to make it less attractive to pests; and,
- Modify your physical environment to altogether repel the pest.

If you choose to use pesticides, be sure to use them properly.