

Using plant protection products in home and allotment gardens safely

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All hobby gardeners desire healthy plants – and dread pests even more. When nothing else can help against an infestation, a plant protection product can be used if necessary. This method should only be adopted in exceptional circumstances. We have compiled some ways that you can use plant protection products safely in home and allotment gardens.

Generally, plant protection products are only available from specialised trade shops. There, they may only be sold by expert staff upon request. Furthermore, the seller is obliged to advise the buyer about their proper use and alternatives. Only plant protection products that bear the text “authorised for use by non-professionals” may be used in home and allotment gardens. In addition, they must be approved for their intended use, e.g. for the relevant plants and pests. Pavements, courtyards and driveways must not be treated with plant protection products. Use in these locations is an administrative offense which can be punishable with a fine, independent of whether the areas are unsurfaced, surfaced or sealed.

Compliance with the following practices is imperative for the protection of health:

Before use

- Read instructions for use and follow protection information
- Keep plant protection products out of the reach of children
- Only prepare the amount of plant protection product required for use in the vessel used for application (e.g. watering can, plant protection product sprayer)
- Plant protection products may only be sprayed in light winds; this will be apparent when the wind only moves leaves and small twigs
- The temperature should be below 25 degrees

During use

- Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long trousers and sturdy shoes
- Do not allow plant protection products to come in contact with hands, skin or eyes
- Do not smoke, eat or drink
- Avoid spray mist; ensure that plant protection products do not drift onto non-target plants and areas not to be treated
- Do not enter treated areas during use and until the spray has dried
- Keep children and pets away
- Neighbours should be informed upon request also

After use

- Wash hands and possibly contaminated areas of the body thoroughly with plenty of water and soap
- Change and wash contaminated clothes
- Should leftover spray fluid remain, dilute it with water at a ratio of 1:10 and apply it to the treated areas
- Rinse spraying equipment several times and apply the rinse water to the treated areas; never discard in the toilet, drain, gutter, gully or body of water
- Store the remaining plant protection product in the original packaging in a lockable cupboard in a cool, dry place
- Plant protection products should be stored frost-free and away from food

- Dispose of empty packaging as well as no-longer-usable plant protection products at local collection points

Those who wish to inform themselves about the permitted tools for home and allotment gardens can find the relevant options in the online data bank:

<https://apps2.bvl.bund.de/psm/jsp/index.jsp>

Things to know about plant protection products in gardens and allotments:

https://www.bvl.bund.de/DE/04_Pflanzenschutzmittel/02_Verbraucher/03_HausKleingarten/psm_HausKleingarten_node.html;jsessionid=0A2AE738F8FE80B6BF4C1748C48799F9.1_cid322

Further information on the subject at the BfR website:

Overview page of articles concerning plant protection products:

https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/a-z_index/plant_protection_products-130188.html

Questions and answers on the authorisation process for plant protection products:

https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/questions_and_answers_on_the_authorisation_process_for_plant_protection_products-192764.html

Questions and answers on residues of plant protection products in food:

https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/questions_and_answers_on_residues_of_plant_protection_products_in_food-60852.html

About the BfR

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