

Spring Cleaning! Safe Storage and Disposal of Lawn and Garden Chemicals

While most plants go dormant in the winter, the chemicals that you may use for gardening remain active. That's why residents are urged to winterize pesticide storage areas. Now is the perfect time to prepare a safe holding area for these materials. It's important for ground water and environmental protection, human and pet safety, and for maintaining the effectiveness of the chemicals and fertilizers.

Lawn and garden chemicals should be:

- Kept in original containers and never mixed in an empty food container.
- Secure from pets and children.
- Kept in a dry, well-lit and well-ventilated area.
- In a space large enough to allow separate spacing for herbicides, insecticides, and fertilizer.
- Enclosed so spills can be quickly cleaned.
- Protected from extreme temperatures.

Extreme temperature variations can cause unwanted problems such as frozen, ruptured containers or hot, volatile glass. Too much humidity or moisture may cause paper bags and metal containers to disintegrate prematurely. Do not store bags of fertilizer directly on the floor as they can absorb moisture. Wet fertilizer turns into hard bricks, making it unusable. Flammable liquids should be stored outside living areas away from any potential ignition sources. An attached garage, for example, may not be the best place for this type of product. In general, most lawn and garden chemicals should be used or disposed of within two years. A few products may have an expiration date listed on the container.

Proper disposal methods for lawn and garden chemicals and containers will vary depending on the product. Typically, empty plastic or glass containers should be rinsed three times, wrapped in several layers of newspaper, and placed in the trash. Read the label for complete instructions. If the container or bag still has some chemical product in it the best action is to take it to one of the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio's (SWACO) household hazardous waste pick up days. If you can't make it to a collection day, leave the product in its original container and make sure it is tightly sealed or tied to take to the next collection. Remember to never dispose of any pesticide in the sink, toilet, bathtub, sewer drain, or on the pavement or ground. Help protect our local water resources!