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Pesticides



What are pesticides?

A pesticide is a mixture that kills pests or keeps them away. A **pest** is a plant or animal that harms human food, health, or safety. In other words, it is what you use to get rid of what you do not want. It is used in farming.

There are many different types. These may include:

Insecticides – Insecticides kill insects and keep them away from fruit and vegetable crops.

Herbicides - Herbicides kill poisonous or otherwise dangerous weeds and keep them from growing where they are not wanted.

Fungicides – Fungicides kill fungi like mold and mildew and keep them from destroying food crops.



A tractor spraying pesticides on crops

How do they help?

Ecobottle Sample

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Ecobottle Sample



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Dangers of using pesticides

Anything that is lethal to pests can cause illness in humans, especially children. Humans can be exposed to pesticides when spraying them on crops, when eating food sprayed with pesticides, or



To avoid consuming pesticides, it is important to wash food.

when pesticides wash off crops and into the water supply. Spraying pesticides can cause water pollution. It can harm people and other animals if it is not washed off of the food we eat. DDT, an insecticide developed in the 1940s, ended up in the food chain. This means that animals ate something with DDT on it and the DDT was absorbed into their bodies. It was then passed up to predators. For example, if a bird ate a fruit sprayed

with DDT, and a cat ate the bird, the DDT would pass from the fruit to the bird to the cat. The dangers of pesticides like DDT include:

- Liver disease
- Headaches
- Breathing problems
- Cancer

What can we use instead?

Instead of using pesticides, nature can help to fight against pests. A farmer can use another insect, plant or animal to get rid of the pest. This is known as **biological pest control**. For example, ladybugs do not hurt food plants but are deadly to a pest called aphids. Certain plants also protect other plants from pests. Another way to keep pests from spreading is by moving crops after a year or two in the same place.



Ladybugs eat pests called aphids.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What
2. What are pesticides?
3. Name two
4. What insect spreads malaria, West Nile virus, and the Zika virus?
5. What type
6. How are
7. Name
8. What is biological pest control? Give an example.

Extension Questions

9. The impacts of pesticides on bees are often in the news today. Research how bees are affected, including a definition of colony collapse, and explain how the loss of bees would affect people.
10. Explain

Ecobottle Sample



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TWF READING

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