

Code of Best Practice No. 2 Using Pesticides on Fruit Trees

This Code of Best Practice doesn't provide exact solutions to the problems of managing pests and weeds, but following its practical guidance will help to protect sprayers, members of the public and consumers of treated produce from the potentially harmful effects of pesticides.

The main risks

Pesticides are valuable tools for agricultural production but only when used in a responsible manner. A pesticide is a poison which when misused can cause considerable harm. The main risks when applying pesticides in farms, gardens and orchards are to:

- The person spraying the pesticide, if they don't take care
- Other users of the area being sprayed such as children, dogs, livestock, wild animals
- Everyone downstream through contamination of water courses with pesticide
- Everyone eating the fruit if pesticide residues remain in the produce

This code of practice is intended to guide you in applying pesticides to avoid these harmful effects.

Who is this code of best practice for?

For all farmers and gardeners using insecticides and fungicides to manage pests on fruit trees such as citrus, peach or guava trees, either their own or spraying pesticides for others.

Good practice for spraying fruit trees

- **Monitor** the trees regularly to check for signs of pests and diseases before they become widespread. Check both sides of leaves, and the trunk.
- Choose the **right pesticide**, make sure you have correctly identified the problem. For example, it's no good treating fruit flies with a product designed for aphids.
- For fruit flies, work out **when to start spraying** by counting back from when you expect to harvest. Check the label for intervals between sprays and the safety period.
- It is important to make sure the pesticide reaches **all areas of the tree**.
- If using a **stepladder**, make sure it is on level ground and well secured, the weight of the sprayer can pull you over.
- Good **personal protective equipment** is vital as you can find yourself standing in a rain of pesticide.
- Always respect the **harvest interval** specified in the label for that product on that crop.
- The best **time of day to spray** is early in the morning when it is cooler.

Trees need food and water in order to give a good harvest, and also to be regularly pruned to keep them strong and healthy.
Spraying neglected trees will only give partial protection.

Things to look out for

- Is there a **stream or other water course** nearby? Don't let your pesticides poison the water supplies.
- Are there any **ponds or troughs** which could be poisoned and affect livestock?
- Do **livestock or pets** use the area you are going to spray? Keep them away from the area for at least 2 weeks after treatment.
- Do **other people** use the area you are going to spray? Inform them or put up warning signs for at least 2 weeks after treatment.

The basics

- Always **read the label** and follow the instructions for dose rate, frequency of application, harvest interval and the personal protective equipment required.
- Choose the correct **nozzle** for the job, you want to produce a fine spray.
- Make sure you are using the right **personal protective equipment** for the product.
- Avoid walking through **wet vegetation** you've just sprayed, you're poisoning yourself.
- Avoid walking through an **unsprayed crop or vegetation** after applying a pesticide and wearing the same coveralls or protective clothing.
- Don't spray if it is **too windy, too hot or too wet**. You are only wasting effort and money and could cause harm through over-stressing the tree, or drift.
- Avoid spraying on steep or **very rough terrain**, the weight of the sprayer can pull you over.
- Dispose of **rinsings** from the knapsack sprayer on or at the edge of the area treated, but avoid exceeding the recommended dose rate on the target itself.
- Store pesticides in a **lockable store** away from food stuffs, and out of the reach of children and pets.

Advice and further information

- Contact the Farmer Support Team or Pest Control Services Officer at ANRD on 24724 for advice on pesticides, application rates, diagnosis of crop pests and diseases, and general crop production.
- UK Pesticides page: <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides>