

Living Safe

# A double-edged sword

By Pete Hypes



Spring has sprung. With temperatures on the rise, plants are blooming and leaves are coming out. Another thing that comes out are the fertilizers, lime, insecticides, and pesticides. To control weeds, grow greener and thicker lawns and control things like ants, we resort to chemical agents. The problem is that most of us are not chemists.

It is important that we read the labels on the stuff that we are using. We want to ensure that we are applying whatever we are using, properly. One piece of that might mean that we need to wear some type of protective clothing. Gloves, eye protection, and maybe even some type of coverall may be necessary, depending on the chemical being used.

We use a chemical agent for a desired purpose. In many cases, water is added to some things or applied after a chemical is put down to allow for better absorption. There are some chemicals that are water insoluble, in other words, they do not mix with water, kind of like oil and vinegar. Pool chemicals are a good example of an agent that must be added to water and not the other way around. Back to those that require water, it is important to add the proper amount of water to reach the desired dilution.

Another chemical characteristic that you must be aware of is the synergistic effect of certain chemicals. Chemicals are fine by themselves, but when mixed with

other chemicals, they will become more potent, unstable, or even lethal. Again, the user label should have this information.

Another thing that you will want to know is what exposure and contamination look like. These two terms are different; you are exposed by being around a chemical, and you are contaminated when you step in it. Water in large quantities is usually a good flushing agent once you have been contaminated by a chemical. Be sure to have read the label prior to contamination so that you know what to do immediately. There may be some cases where water is not the right thing to use. Knowing the signs and symptoms of exposure or contamination is important to your safety, your family's safety, your pets' safety, and the environment's safety. Some exposures and contaminations will require medical intervention, and you must know when to say when.

After you have used the chemicals in the correct way, you will now need to store them away in the right manner. Open containers must be properly sealed. Keeping in mind the synergistic effect, some chemicals must be kept away from other chemicals, even in storage. Another thing to keep in mind is that you must keep all chemicals out of the reach of children and animals. Something that I could have mentioned earlier is a resource, when a poisoning has occurred, the Poison Control Center, 804-828-9123. If you do not live in the Richmond area, you can look

online for the nearest Poison Control Center. Again, this is something that you want to think about before exposure or contamination occurs. Time is of the essence when a problem occurs. The label is the best means of information concerning use, storage, safety, and what to do in the event of exposure or contamination. Take the time to read the label before applying any chemical to your property.

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**CLAWSER**, Mrs. Anna Dale, 93, of Chester.

**DYSON**, Mrs. Marilyn "Mary Lynn" Lewis, 91, widow of James A. Dyson Sr.

**GARCIA**, Mrs. Johana, 30, of North Chesterfield, wife of Jose Antonio Garcia.

**GORMAN**, Mr. John Donald III, 68, of North Chesterfield, widower of Deborah C. Gorman.

**GUNN**, Mrs. Jane DuPriest, 91, of North Chesterfield, widow of James W. Gunn.

**HANGER**, Mr. Harry H. Jr., 65, of Chesterfield, husband of Elaine Hanger.

**HODSON**, Mr. William Alvin, 89, of Chesterfield, husband of Ann Hodson.

**PRIEST**, Mr. James Roland, 69, of Chesterfield, widower of Eula Kitchen.

**ROGERS**, Mrs. Winifred Glass, 86, of Chester, widow of James Henry Rogers.

**SALE**, Ms. Janie Elizabeth, 74, of Chesterfield.

**SOUTHERS**, Mr. Paul Joseph Sr., 67, of North Chesterfield.

**THOMPSON**, Charles S. Sr., of North Chesterfield.

**TILGHMAN**, Mr. Luther Elmer, 89, of Chester, widower of Frances Langston Tilghman.

**VAUGHAN**, Mr. George Frederick, 81, of Chester, husband of Sue Carroll Vaughan.

**WAGONER**, Mr. Gregory Daryl, 51, of North Chesterfield, son of Judy Bartlett and brother of Jeff Wagoner.

**YOHO**, Mr. Harold Leroy, 85, of Chester.



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