



Mothballs

What are they, and how do they work?



National Pesticide Information Center

What are Mothballs?

Mothballs Are Pesticides That, When Used Properly, Control Clothes Moths and Other Fabric Pests

- In the U.S., they generally contain high concentrations of the active ingredients naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene.
- These solid chemicals slowly become fumes at air temperature.
- The build-up of these fumes inside closed containers kills clothes moths and their eggs.
- Both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as well as the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) regulate the sale and use of these products.

Pesticide Product Labeling: Why is it important?

- A pesticide label is a legal agreement between the registrant, the EPA, the end-user, as well as VDACS.
- The label specifies exactly where and how to legally use the product. In other words, the label is the law.
- Before using any pesticide product, ensure that you have read the label and understand the instructions for its legal use.
- In general, mothball product labels instruct the user to place mothballs inside a closed, airtight container where the fumes will not be able to escape.

Mothballs Are Not Snake Repellents!



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What are the Environmental and Health Impacts?

- When used outdoors, mothballs can act as soil and water contaminants as well as contribute to air pollution.
- Children and pets may also mistake these products as food or candy and ingest them leading to pesticide poisoning.
- If you believe a person has ingested one of these products, contact the Poison Control Center at **1.800.222.1222**.



THE LABEL IS THE LAW

Common Misuses of Mothballs:

- Outdoor Use – Do not use Mothballs outdoors or outside a closed, airtight container.
- Repellents – Do not use Mothballs to repel snakes, rodents, or any other animal that is not a fabric pest.
- Off-Label Use – Any use that is outside the label instructions is a violation of law.

For More Information:

Office of Pesticide Services
804.786.3798
(8:15 a.m.-5 p.m. EST)
vdacs.virginia.gov/pesticides.shtml

The National Pesticide Information Center

1.800.858.7378
(8 a.m.-Noon PST)
E-mail: npic@ace.orst.edu
npic.orst.edu



*VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT
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Regulations, Proper Use, and Health Effects