



# THE NEXT STEP Toward a Healthier Future

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SEBASTOPOL TOXICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

## A Fluttering Among the Fettuccine

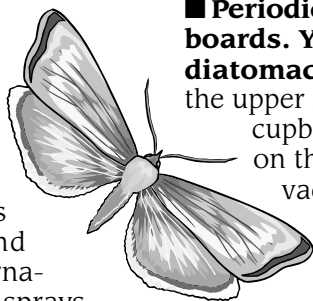
Do you have a spotless kitchen and spartan lifestyle, with gleaming, echoing cupboards including five or six essentials and no leftovers? If so, read no further.

Our family cooks a lot, and we have messy cupboards with odds and ends of things like bulghur wheat, potato flour, cake flour, bread flour, couscous, etc. When you buy this stuff for a recipe, you often get leftover amounts, which unfortunately don't always get used up right away. As my mother said, "Show me a clean kitchen, and I'll show you a lousy cook." I don't have room in the cupboards to store each item in a Mason jar. And so we have grain moths.

The purpose of this article is to help folks avoid **grain moths** and their larvae, and find alternatives to toxic bug-killer sprays and bug-killer shelf paper.

Naturally, we all know we should use up our bits of odd grains, half-stale crackers, etc., and seal things up. But if we're not perfect, or we haven't organized our time well enough, we have . . . my kitchen, for example. Here are some ideas to try:

**STEP is a project of the City of Sebastopol**, implemented by local citizen volunteers to nurture a healthier community for all. **You can help create STEP!** Write an article, share your success story, or be a liaison to businesses or schools. To find out more, call 829-2999.



■ **As much as possible, put food in your cabinets into sealed containers.** Smaller items can be stored in small plastic tubs and stacked.

■ **When you put something in the cupboard, put the new item in back,** pushing older items to the front. Encourage yourself to use up that bag of chickpea meal sooner! Label and date things when possible.

■ **If you buy large bags of pet food, birdseed, etc., transfer them to tight-fitting containers.** Also, if you see these food bags on sale, there may be a reason they're so cheap; inspect the bags for tiny holes where the new pests might already be present.

■ **Periodically wipe out your cupboards. You can also wipe some diatomaceous earth (DE)** along the upper and lower corners of your cupboards, leaving a slight film on the shelf surface. Many larvae enter through the bottoms of bags or boxes, and the DE will kill them.

And as you're going around all the corners, you'll be wiping up any cocoons or egg cases. Important: Always use household DE, and not the swimming-pool-filter type, which is not good for humans or pets. Also, DE is an irritant, so use a modest amount (a little goes a long way), don't create a big cloud, and wash your hands after use.

■ I've been experimenting with **bay leaves** to repel moths, as I was recently given a large stock. Annie Berthold-Bond <[www.care2.com](http://www.care2.com)> recommends them scattered on shelves and taped to the insides of containers. And my shelves look

## More Toxics Roundup Dates

Protect our shared water supply and environment by keeping your old pesticides, paint, solvents, bleach, batteries, etc. out of the trash. Bring them to a **Household Toxics Roundup** instead!

The next Sebastopol Roundup is 7/12 from 9-3pm at Vets Hall, 282 High Street. Other upcoming dates are: 7/26 Windsor, 7/25+7/26 Gualala, 8/9 Cotati, 8/23 Guerneville, 9/13 Santa Rosa, 9/27 Petaluma, and 10/11 Cloverdale.

For more about times, places, and appropriate materials, call the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency at 565-3375, or see <[www.recyclenow.org](http://www.recyclenow.org)>.

pretty good so far, but I'd appreciate readers' feedback.

■ **Pheromone traps are available**, which attract and trap male moths and last about three months. Be careful to get the right traps for moths in our area. There are also specific traps for clothes moths, apple moths and other moths. They should be used at the time of year when those moths swarm the most. Of course, the traps won't kill eggs or larvae already present. One interesting thing that is that the traps only attract a specific insect; so once you get some of these in your trap you can study them, look them up in books, or bring them to a nursery, to verify what insects you have. You can get appropriate traps at hardware stores, nurseries, or online.

■ **If you get moths or their eggs in your grains, you can kill them by freezing them** for 4 days at 0°. Then discard appropriately.

■ **I've seen reports of people repelling moths** with sticks of gum, including bubble gum, doublemint gum, and spearmint gum on shelves and in flour bags, etc., but never have tried it myself. Please write in and let us know your experiences.

~ Rebecca Dwan

Sources: *Olkowski/Daar*, *Common-Sense Pest Control*. [www.care2.com](http://www.care2.com). *Vermont Country Store*. [www.designfusion-intl.com](http://www.designfusion-intl.com)

## Protecting Children from Pesticides

### Toxic Chemical Study Sounds Warning for Children

The most extensive study of Americans' exposure to toxic chemicals reports that high levels of exposure continue, and that children are more exposed than adults to a range of toxic chemicals.

*The Second National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals*, from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), analyzed blood and urine samples for 2,500 participants who represented a cross section of the U.S. population for 1999 and 2000.

A total of 89 of the 116 chemicals tested were found to be present in at least some study participants. Among the pesticides found was chlorpyrifos, a widely-used organophosphate (OP) pesticide; levels were about twice as high in children as adults. Also found was DDE, a major metabolite of the insecticide DDT, banned in the U.S. in 1973.

Dr. John Balbus at Environment Defense said the report is further proof "that children are more exposed to a wide variety of chemicals." He praised the study for providing information that helps determine who is most at risk and how to prevent exposures.

Sources: <<http://ens-news.com/ens/feb2003/2003-02-04-11.asp>>. The CDC report is at <[www.cdc.gov/exposure/report](http://www.cdc.gov/exposure/report)>. More about children and pesticide exposure is at <<http://ens-news.com/ens/nov1999/1999-11-15.as>>.

### Pesticide Exposure Linked to Health Problems

Many studies show correlations between pesticide exposure and health problems. For instance, a study of Missouri children found a correlation between brain cancer and use of household pesticides like diazinon and carbaryl (Sevin). Another study showed that children



with non-Hodgkins lymphoma were three times more likely to be exposed to a professional exterminator service at home than matched controls. In 12 of 19 other published studies, pesticide exposure was found to increase the rate of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. A National Academy of Sciences report estimated that pesticides in food could (conservatively) be causing an added 20,000 U.S. cancer cases a year.

Sources: *Archives of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology* (24) 87-92. *Cancer* 2000: 89 (11): 2315-21. *Regulating Pesticides in Food*, National Academy of Sciences, 1987.

### Eating Organics Cuts Children's Pesticide Loads

Children who eat organic foods have lower body levels of organophosphate (OP) pesticides, according to a new study reported in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* (October 13, 2002).

University of Washington researchers compared the levels of OP metabolites (breakdown products) in pre-school children in Seattle and found that those consuming conventionally grown produce had pesticide residue levels nine times higher on average than those who ate organic.

Dosage estimates showed that consuming organic produce reduced children's exposure levels from above to below the Environmental Protection Agency's safety levels, effectively shifting their exposures to a range of "negligible risk."

"Consumption of organic produce appears to provide a relatively simple means for parents to reduce their children's exposure to organophosphorus pesticides," the researchers concluded. In addition, their conclusion that small children may be exceeding "safe" levels of pesticide exposure should encourage regulators to, at the very least, reduce uses of these pesticides on food crops.

Source: *Pesticide Action Network* <[www.panna.org/resources/panups/panup\\_20030131.dv.html](http://www.panna.org/resources/panups/panup_20030131.dv.html)>. This page also has links for more information. The article abstract is at <<http://ehpnet1.niehs.nih.gov/docs/2003/5754/abstract.pdf>>.

## Update: Clopyralid in Compost

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has initiated new restrictions aimed at protecting commercial compost from potential contamination by the herbicide clopyralid ("clo-PEER-ah-lid"). As reported in *The Next STEP* (Vol. II, No. 3), clopyralid has been found in municipal compost, risking harm to lawns and gardens.

To address this problem, DPR has initiated new procedures for the use of clopyralid products by lawn and turf professionals. Golf courses were exempted because product labels already prohibit use on tees and greens. Products for farm, rangeland, and forest use are not affected.

DPR previously announced that it would also seek cancellation of 15 clopyralid products used on residential lawns. The manufacturer initiated product label changes to address DPR's concerns but old products will still be on shelves until sold out, expected this year. (So check any herbicide's active ingredients!)

Linda Moulton-Patterson, Chair of the Integrated Waste Management Board, said that the new rules are "a crucial step in protecting the viability of compost markets and the continued success of our waste diversion efforts."

Source: California DPR.

## ABOUT STEP

**The Next STEP** is published six times a year for Sebastopol residents by the **Sebastopol Toxics Education Program** (STEP).

**STEP's mission** is to support Sebastopol citizens in reducing their toxic use and exposure, creating a healthier and safer Sebastopol for everyone.

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