

USE OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS BY HOUSEHOLDS

HOUSE 8

Plant protection products (PPPs) are used primarily to protect plants and control undesirable plant matter¹. They are mainly used in agriculture, but also in gardens, by households². These non-professional uses are often unsuitable (lack of information about alternatives, non-compliant application, etc.) and can harm the health of users and those around them, as well as the environment.

A survey³ was carried out in 2016 among a panel of 2,033 Walloon households with a garden, which were representative of the Walloon population as a whole, to determine their motivations for using PPPs and/or alternative methods and to identify the methods of purchase and use of PPPs.

42% of Walloon households use PPPs in their garden

Of the 2,033 households surveyed, 20% use exclusively PPPs, 22% use both PPPs and alternative methods, 23% use exclusively alternative methods, and 35% use neither. There are various motivations of households using only PPPs, with the most frequently cited factors being better control of weeds, a quicker, easier and more effective method. Conversely, households that use only alternative methods give priority to preserving the environment and reducing the risks for those around them. Analysis of the profile of households that use only PPPs indicates a higher incidence of households with a higher social class, and households whose main income earner works full-time.

Use of PPPs not always in compliance

Households using PPPs (42%) mainly make their purchases in non-specialised shops (52% in DIY stores and 29% in supermarkets, compared to 41% in specialised garden centres), although 4% purchase the products illicitly, namely *via* a farmer. Before using the product, 6% of households do not read the product label at all and 33% take a cursory look. Wearing gloves is a common protective measure (75%

of users), but other means of protection are rarely used: boots (26%), goggles (18%), masks (16%), protective clothing (9%). A significant proportion of users (20%) do not wear any protection at all. When asked about the equipment used to apply PPPs, backpack sprayers and normal sprayers were in the top three (69% and 22%, respectively), as were watering cans (29%). Finally, as regards waste management, 64% of PPP users deposit their empty packaging or excess/expired remaining product at the container park, while 18% deposit them in the PMC⁴ waste bin, 16% in the general waste bin and 1% incinerates them.

The Walloon Pesticide Reduction Programme (Programme wallon de réduction des pesticides - PWRP) 2013-2017 and households

The PWRP 2013-2017⁵ contains various measures to regulate the use of PPPs and raise awareness of good gardening practices among households. The survey results show that the "responsible and reasoned use of PPPs" by households, as advocated by the PWRP, appears to be applied moderately.

[1] They include particularly fungicides, herbicides, anti-foaming agents, insecticides, molluscicides and rodenticides. | [2] → AGRI 6 | [3] GfK, 2016c | [4] Plastics, metals and beverage cartons | [5] → TRANSV 3

Fig. HOUSE 8-1 The use of plant protection products (PPPs) by Walloon households*

