

Safe Disposal of Mothballs

Do NOT

- ✗ Flush mothballs
- ✗ Burn mothballs
- ✗ Throw mothballs in household trash

Instead,

- ✓ Take unused mothballs to a household hazardous waste collection site.
- ✓ Contact your local solid waste authority for instructions.

Preventing Moth Damage Without Pesticides

Consider safer alternatives when storing clothes:
Store clean clothing in airtight plastic containers or vacuum bags.

Regularly vacuum and inspect storage areas.
Freeze infested items in sealed plastic bags to kill larvae.

Georgia Department of Agriculture
agr.georgia.gov | 404-656-4958

Resources & References

National Pesticide Information Center
1-800-858-7378 | npic.orst.edu

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/pesticides

Label Search Tool
www.epa.gov/pesticide-labels

Georgia Department of Agriculture
Pesticide Division
(404) 656-4958 | www.agr.georgia.gov

Poison Control Center
1-800-222-1222 | www.poison.org

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
www.atsdr.cdc.gov

UGA Extension's Pesticide Safety
Education Program (PSEP)
www.psep.uga.edu

The information in this publication does not in any way replace or supersede the restrictions, precautions, directions, or other information on the pesticide label or any other regulatory requirements.

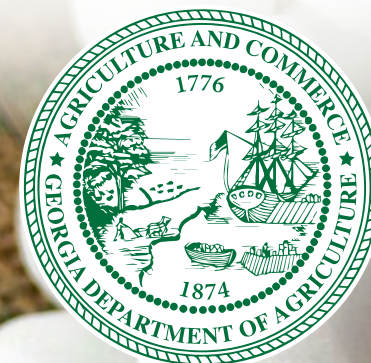
Georgia Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Inputs Division

FACTS ABOUT MOTHBALLS



What Every
Georgian Should
Know about Safe and
Legal Use



Commissioner Tyler J Harper | agr.georgia.gov

Mothballs Overview: Know What You're Using

Mothballs are commonly used to protect clothes from moths and insects—but they are actually classified as pesticides under both state and federal law.



Why are mothballs used?

They kill clothes moths and their larvae by releasing a vapor toxic to insects. This vapor builds up in closed containers to provide protection.

How They Work:

Both naphthalene and PDCB sublimate—they turn from a solid into a gas. This vapor kills insects in sealed environments but also can potentially cause health risks if inhaled.

Common Active Ingredients:

- Naphthalene— A petroleum-based compound with a strong smell
- Paradichlorobenzene (PDCB) – Used in deodorants and moth control

Important Notes:

- If you smell mothballs, you're already being exposed to the chemicals
- The same vapors that are toxic to moths and other insects can also be harmful to people, pets, and the environment if mothballs are misused.

Legal Use & Misuse

Follow the Label - It's the

Legal Use



- ✓ Use only in airtight, sealed containers like garment bags
- ✓ Use only for listed pests (usually clothes moths)
- ✓ Follow directions for placement, dosage, and storage

Off-label use is illegal and could result in penalties or enforcement action. It also puts people, pets, and the environment at risk.

Potential Misuse



- ✗ Scattering in attics, basements, or crawlspaces
- ✗ Placing in closets, drawers, under furniture, or vehicles
- ✗ Trying to repel wildlife, squirrels, snakes, or raccoons

Mothballs are commonly thought to repel snakes, but they are not actually designed or labeled to be used that way and are proven to have very little direct effect on snakes.



Health & Environmental Risks - More Than Just a Strong Smell!

Human Health Effects:

Short-term exposure to vapors may cause:

- Headaches, nausea, dizziness
- Eye, nose, or throat irritation
- Breathing difficulties

Children Are Especially at Risk!

Mothballs may look like candy or toys. Just one can poison a child.



If a mothball is ingested, call Poison Control immediately: 1-800-222-1222

Pet Hazards

Pets exposed to mothballs may show signs of vomiting, tremors, lethargy, or organ failure.

Environmental Harm

Improper use or disposal of mothballs can contaminate air, soil, and water, and harm wildlife.

Reminder:

Mothballs are pesticides. Use them only as directed on the label. Never assume "more is better." Improper use can harm your health, your family, and the environment.