

Atrazine

Atrazine is a selective, residual triazine herbicide used to control broadleaf and grassy weeds in some agricultural crops. In Tasmania, it is more commonly used in forestry for the establishment of coniferous trees (eg. radiata pine).

Atrazine is absorbed by plants mainly through the roots, but also through the foliage. Once absorbed, it is translocated upward and accumulates in the growing tips and the new leaves of the plant.

In susceptible plants species, atrazine inhibits photosynthesis. Leaves will start turning yellow at the margins and progress inwards, eventually turning a red-bronze colour and then dying. In tolerant plants, atrazine is metabolised.

Product Trade Names

Products registered for use in Tasmania are:

Atranex	Forest Mix	Nu-Trazine
Atrazine	Maizina	Nu-Zinole
Farmozine		

Ecological Effects

Atrazine is not toxic to bees, and practically non-toxic to birds. It is slightly toxic to fish and other aquatic life such as invertebrates. It has a low level of bio-accumulation in fish.

Environmental Fate

Atrazine is highly persistent in soil. Chemical hydrolysis, followed by degradation by microorganisms, accounts for most of the breakdown in the environment. Degradation products have no herbicidal properties. Organic material increases the rate of hydrolysis.

Atrazine is moderately to highly mobile in soils with low clay content or low organic matter content. Because it does not adsorb strongly to soil particles and has a lengthy half-life, it has a

high potential for ground water contamination despite its low solubility.

Human Toxicity

Atrazine is slightly to moderately toxic to humans and other animals. It can be absorbed orally, dermally, and by inhalation. Symptoms of poisoning include abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting, eye irritation, irritation of mucous membranes, and skin reactions. It is a mild skin irritant.

Degradation products derived from atrazine are less toxic than atrazine itself.

Based on tests conducted on laboratory animals, the following may be concluded:

- Atrazine is not likely to cause reproductive problems.
- Atrazine does not cause foetal abnormalities.
- Atrazine does not cause mutations.
- Atrazine is not likely to cause cancer.

Atrazine is classified as a Schedule 5 poison in the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Drugs and Poisons.

For further information, please contact:

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or write to:

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