

Health Questions and Answers for Altus[®]

For use on against Glassy-winged Sharpshooter

Prepared by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, CalEPA



Q: What is Altus[®]?

A: Altus[®] is an insecticidal product containing the active ingredient flupyradifurone. It is being used by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and your County Agricultural Commissioner to control the glassy-winged sharpshooter, an invasive insect that can spread plant diseases. Diluted Altus[®] is applied by spraying from the ground level to foliage of targeted plants (citrus trees and ornamental plants) and when the insects feed upon tissues of the treated plant, they are exposed to flupyradifurone.

Q: How does the active ingredient, flupyradifurone, work?

A: When insects ingest or come in contact with flupyradifurone, it binds to their nerve cells. This affects transmission of nerve impulses and causes tremors and other nervous system problems. This can lead to the death of the insect. Flupyradifurone does not bind as strongly to mammalian nerve cells, making it much less toxic to humans, dogs, cats and other mammals.

Q: What are flupyradifurone's human health effects?

A: Animal testing shows flupyradifurone causes effects in the liver, thyroid, and on skeletal muscle. However, these effects are not expected at the low levels of flupyradifurone that occurs when Altus[®] is used according to the instructions on the label. Flupyradifurone has not been shown to cause cancer, but may cause slight eye irritation or skin-sensitization reactions (allergic contact dermatitis) in sensitive individuals.

Q: How do regulatory agencies classify flupyradifurone's health effects and risk?

A: Flupyradifurone is classified by the US Environmental Protection Agency as a "Reduced Risk" pesticide when used on ornamental plants and crops such as citrus, stonefruit, avocados, leafy greens, and greenhouse vegetables. This means that flupyradifurone poses less risk to human health and the environment than other pesticides allowed for the same uses.

Q: What is known about the inert ingredients in Altus[®]?

A: In animal studies, some of the inert ingredients in Altus[®] caused slight skin or eye irritation when applied at concentrations significantly higher than what humans would be exposed to from Altus[®] applications. When used according to label instructions, Altus[®] is highly diluted in water, ensuring a very low level of human exposure to inert ingredients. Some of the inert ingredients in Altus[®] are used in various consumer products including cosmetics and paper products that come in contact with food.

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Q: What precautions should people take when Altus® is applied to plants in their yard?

A: As a precaution, individuals and pets should stay indoors during treatment. Residents should not perform yard work or allow children or pets to play near the treated areas immediately after treatment, and until the spray has dried.

Q: What precautions should people take after Altus® is applied to plants in their yard?

A: Residents should avoid contact with treated plant materials for 12 hours. Follow all instructions provided by CDFA or your local County Agricultural Commissioner.

Q: Can I eat fruit from plants treated with Altus®?

A: After Altus® is applied to plants, flupyradifurone may be found in the fruit and leaves where it provides long-lasting control against insects. However, the detected levels of flupyradifurone in plant parts are very low and eating the fruits or leaves does not pose a human health hazard. You should wait 24 hours after the Altus® application before harvesting citrus fruit, and 14 days for all other fruits. Thoroughly wash fruit before eating, and wash your hands after handling the fruit.

Q: What should I do if I feel sick after the application of Altus® products?

A: Call the California Poison Control System hotline at (800) 222-1222 or consult with your physician.

For further information, please contact:

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