



NJDHSS-Operations



Public Health Alert

29 November 2010 **Illegal Pesticides in Misleading Packaging**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is warning the public about a potential threat regarding imported mothballs from China that could be mistaken for candy.¹

The EPA discovered that a New York-based company had attempted to import mothballs from China that could be mistaken for candy and were not registered with the EPA. Federal officials believe the mothballs contain para-dichlorobenzene, a chemical often used in mothballs and toxic to inhale or ingest.

The product in question, Fuji Lavender Moth Tablets, had not been registered with the EPA.

About 4800 brightly-decorated bags of the product, which the EPA displayed on its website with the title “misleading packaging”, were discovered during an inspection of a shipment at a warehouse in Kearny, NJ.¹

The EPA directed US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to seize and destroy the product.

EPA officials remarked that the registration process ensures that the EPA knows what pesticides are in the product and that the products bear labels with directions for proper use.

The agency feels that mothballs sold in colorful packaging that resembles candy pose a particular risk to children.

The balls could easily obstruct a child’s airway. The characteristic smell might prevent someone from ingesting, and it is highly unlikely more than one would be ingested. Although not highly toxic, as with all non-food items, caution should be exercised in the use of any pesticide.²

The EPA is looking into whether the product has reached stores and is asking the public to look out for the mothballs while the Agency continues its investigation.

Members of the public should not purchase the Fuji Lavender Moth Tablets.

If a consumer has bought them, he or she should contact EPA at 732-321-4461 to report this product and to ask for assistance in properly disposing of it.

If an exposure should occur, contact the New Jersey Poison Information and Education hot line a1-800-222-1222 for help 24/7.



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¹ US Department of Homeland Security Office of Health Affairs Biosurveillance Common Operating Picture report 24 November 2010

² New Jersey Poison Information and Education System

³ http://www.epa.gov/region2/pesticides/pest_gallery.html