



Is Your Garden Hose Safe?

By Leslie Rae Henry, Ag & NR Dept. Chairperson

On July 12, 07 the ABC News show Good Morning America had a segment on garden hoses. I had not thought much about my garden hoses before this news flash. Since I was a kid, I have had a drink of cold water out of my family's garden hose and played in the water from the lawn sprinkler.

According to ABC News this may not be safe today as many garden hoses are manufactured from a PVC plastic that is considered a "dirty" plastic because it contains the chemical element lead. In addition, we all know what happened to the Roman Empire due to lead poisoning during Caesar's time.

I have seen the warnings that these hoses are not approved for use in the state of California (**NOT LABELED FOR SALE IN CALIFORNIA**) but did not give it a second thought to look into why. A garden hose is safe, right.

Our department had purchased hoses for our organic gardening summer class program this spring for watering our vegetables. Now I have to rethink and look at purchasing new hoses of RV, camper or marine quality hoses, which are safe for human and animal drinking water.

In a none, scientific test ABC's Phoenix Affiliate KNXV-TV tested ten hoses purchased at local stores by filling sections of the hoses with clean water and sealing the ends they put them outside for about a day. Water samples from the hoses were taken to a water quality lab and tested five of the ten did not meet EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) for lead.

Looking closer at the note on our purchased hoses label it states: "This hose is intended for routine outdoor watering applications. This hose is not intended for drinking water use....This hose is made in part from recycled materials."

Please check your warning labels on all hoses before purchasing. If your intent is for use to water any livestock or to utilize the hose to fill a swimming pool please look into purchasing a garden hose classified for drinking water.

Reference:

ABC-News. [Dangerous Lead Levels Found in Some Garden Hoses](http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=3369894). July 12, 2007.
<http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=3369894>. Accessed 7/12/2007.