

Caution on HETP

HETP (hexaethyl tetraphosphate) is being used rather extensively by florists as a spray for red spider mite control on roses and other crops. In most cases various commercial HETP spray formulations such as Vapotone and Blot have been used, in other cases straight HETP. Very few reports have been received of injury from the sprays at recommended dilutions other than some yellowing of older leaves on roses and some small burned spots in leaves of various plants.

In January, however, a peculiar injury to rose buds was reported from four ranges in western New York following 2 to 3 applications of HETP at 1 to 1600 dilution one to two weeks apart. The buds were abnormally short and broad, like bull-heads, and the petals were fringed and ragged looking. The injury did not show until three to four weeks after the applications were started, indicating that the effect was on young developing buds.

In two ranges the injury was rather slight and cleared up rather rapidly, but in one range injury has been severe and persisted for about two months. This grower has had to discard about 12,000 deformed buds.

The nature of the injury suggested a hormone effect. None of the growers had used 2, 4-D in their ranges or sprayers. The material used had all come through one chemical concern which is a large producer of 2, 4-D, and it was suspected that contamination may have occurred in making or bottling the material at the plant. This suspicion was strengthened by the fact that no other cases of such injury had been reported after rather extensive use of HETP sprays by rose growers.

Recently, however, another case of serious bud deformity on roses has been reported from Michigan following three applications of Vapotone at 1 to 800 dilution over a four-week period. This grower reports that he had not used 2, 4-D in the range, so that the possibility of contamination of the spray equipment seems slight.

The situation is very confused at present, and it is not known whether the bud deformity is due to HETP itself under certain

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conditions, or possibly to contamination with 2, 4-D or some other material causing growth substance effects. Rose growers using the HETP should proceed with caution and watch for signs of any abnormal buds. If this effect shows up in your range we would appreciate your reporting it to us. It would seem wise not to make more than two applications at close intervals until further information on HETP sprays is obtained.

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