

# Endothall Chemical Fact Sheet

## Formulations

Endothall is the common name of the active ingredient endothal acid (7-oxabicyclo[2,2,1]heptane-2,3-dicarboxylic acid). Endothall products are used to control a wide range of terrestrial and aquatic plants. Both granular and liquid formulations of endothall are available for aquatic use in Wisconsin. Two types of endothall are available: dipotassium salt (such as Aquathol®) and monoamine salts (such as Hydrothol 191). Trade names are provided for your reference only and are neither exhaustive nor endorsements of one product over another.

## Aquatic Use and Considerations

Endothall is a contact herbicide that prevents certain plants from making the proteins they need. Factors such as density and size of the plants present, water movement, and water temperature determine how quickly endothall works. Under favorable conditions, plants begin to weaken and die within a few days after application.

Endothall products vary somewhat in the target species they control, so it is important to always check the product label for the list of species that may be affected. Endothall products are effective on Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) and also kill desirable native species such as pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp.) and coontail (*Ceratophyllum* spp.). In addition, Hydrothol 191 formulations can also kill wild celery (*Vallisneria americana*) and some species of algae (*Chara*, *Cladophora*, *Spirogyra*, and *Pithophora*).

Endothall will kill several high value species of aquatic plants (especially *Potamogeton* spp.) in addition to nuisance species. The plants that offer important values to aquatic ecosystems often resemble, and may be growing with those plants targeted for treatment. Careful identification of plants and application of

endothall products is necessary to avoid unintended harm to valuable native species.

For effective control, endothall should be applied when plants are actively growing. Most submersed weeds are susceptible to Aquathol formulations. The choice of liquid or granular formulations depends on the size of the area requiring treatment. Granular is more suited to small areas or spot treatments, while liquid is more suitable for large areas.

If endothall is applied to a pond or enclosed bay with abundant vegetation, no more than 1/3 to 1/2 of the surface should be treated at one time because excessive decaying vegetation may deplete the oxygen content of the water and kill fish. Untreated areas should not be treated until the vegetation exposed to the initial application decomposes.

## Post-Treatment Water Use Restrictions

Due to the many formulations of this chemical the post-treatment water use restrictions vary. Each product label must be followed. For all products there is a drinking water standard of 0.1 ppm and can not be applied within 600 feet of a potable water intake. Use restrictions for Hydrothol products have irrigation and animal water restrictions.

## Herbicide Degradation, Persistence and Trace Contaminants

Endothall disperses with water movement and is broken down by microorganisms into carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. Field studies show that low concentrations of endothall persist in water for several days to several weeks depending on environmental conditions. The half-life (the time it takes for half of the active ingredient to degrade) averages five to ten days. Complete degradation by microbial action is 30-60 days. The initial breakdown product of endothall is an amino acid, glutamic acid, which is rapidly consumed by bacteria.

## Impacts on Fish and Other Aquatic Organisms

At recommended rates, the dipotassium salts (Aquathol and Aquathol K) do not have any apparent short-term effects on the fish species that have been tested. In addition, numerous studies have shown the dipotassium salts induce no significant adverse effects in aquatic invertebrates (such as snails, aquatic insects, and crayfish) when used at label application rates. However, as with other herbicide use, some plant-dwelling populations of aquatic organisms may be adversely affected by application of endothall formulations due to habitat loss.

In contrast to the low toxicity of the dipotassium salt formulations, laboratory studies have shown the monoamine salts (Hydrothol 191 formulations) are toxic to fish at dosages above 0.3 parts per million (ppm). In particular, the liquid formulation will readily kill fish present in a treatment site. By comparison, EPA approved label rates for plant control range from 0.05 to 2.5 ppm. In recognition of the extreme toxicity of the monoamine salt, product labels recommend no treatment with Hydrothol 191 where fish are an important resource.

Other aquatic organisms can also be adversely affected by Hydrothol 191 formulations depending upon the concentration used and duration of exposure. Tadpoles and freshwater scuds have demonstrated sensitivity to Hydrothol 191 at levels ranging from 0.5 to 1.8 ppm.

Findings from field and laboratory studies with bluegills suggest that bioaccumulation of dipotassium salt formulations by fish from water treated with the herbicide is unlikely. Tissue sampling has shown residue levels become undetectable a few days after treatment.



## Human Health

Most concerns about adverse health effects revolve around applicator exposure. Liquid endothall formulations in concentrated form are highly toxic. Because endothall can cause eye damage and skin irritation, users should minimize exposure by wearing suitable eye and skin protection.

At this time, the EPA believes endothall poses no unacceptable risks to water users if water use restrictions are followed. EPA has determined that endothall is not a neurotoxicant or mutagen, nor is it likely to be a human carcinogen.

## For Additional Information

Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Pesticide Programs  
[www.epa.gov/pesticides](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides)

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade,  
and Consumer Protection  
<http://datcp.wi.gov/Plants/Pesticides/>

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
608-266-2621  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/plants/>

Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/>

National Pesticide Information Center  
1-800-858-7378  
<http://npic.orst.edu/>

