



MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

THINKING SAFE AND GREEN



**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

#8

SAFE LADDER USE

Information given here is intended for use by program representatives, master gardeners, and those they train.



In excess of 30,000 people are injured each year in ladder-related accidents. The leading cause of ladder-related accidents is improper use of ladders.

Ladder Selection:

Ladders are assigned a duty rating that indicates the maximum load (combined weight of user and materials) the ladder may carry. Ladders should be selected according to the anticipated maximum load as follows: Type III light-duty ladders are duty rated for 200 pounds; Type II medium-duty ladders are duty rated for 225 pounds; and Type I heavy-duty ladders are duty rated for 250 pounds. Aluminum ladders are not suitable for work that may involve contact with electrical currents.

Ladder Precautions:

- Always inspect ladder for defects (e.g., damaged rungs, steps, braces) before using.
- Any ladder with defects must be removed from use.
- Always set ladder on a solid, level surface.
- Stepladders should be fully opened with spreaders locked.
- Extension ladders should be placed at a four-to-one ratio (i.e., ladder base should be one foot out for every four feet of height to the support point).
- Always assure all locks on extension ladders are properly engaged.
- Never place a ladder in front of a door that is not locked, blocked, or guarded.
- If an extension ladder is to be used to climb on a roof, there should be 3 feet (or 3 rungs) extending beyond the edge of the roof.
- Always mount ladders from the center and climb/descend the ladder using both hands.
- Never step on the top two rungs or top step of any ladder or platform of a stepladder.
- Never “walk” a stepladder while standing on it.
- Never place a ladder against a window pane or sash.
- Never use ladders during strong winds or storms.
- Never stand on a rung or step and face away from the ladder.

