



# The Guardian

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## Science shows pesticides can be used safely

[Letters to the Editor \(The Guardian\)](#)

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commentary

By Lorne Hepworth

Editor: (Re: P.E.I. government should ban cosmetic pesticides, The Guardian, Aug. 29)

Pesticides help protect private and public properties from insect, weed and disease infestations and control threats to human health, like rats and mosquitoes. They also help ensure that Canadians have a safe and affordable supply of food. Unfortunately, a recent column provided misinformation about the safety of pesticides used to protect private and public green spaces and it must be corrected.

Health Canada's PMRA evaluates all pesticides whether "synthetic" or "natural" before they can be sold in Canada. Whether these products are used on lawns or crops, regulators base their decisions on the best available scientific information.

Quite simply, Health Canada does not approve any product for use that it considers to pose an unacceptable risk to humans, including vulnerable groups such as children and pregnant women, or the environment.

If any provincial government has scientific information about a particular pesticide, the appropriate course of action would be to inform Health Canada, which can then do a special review.

Mr. Roger Gordon should know better than to cherry pick information that supports his view on this topic. Health Canada reviews all available scientific data to determine whether a pesticide can be used without risk of harm.

A ban on urban pesticides stands to do more harm than good because it would simply rob urban residents of the ability to use federally-approved tools to control pest infestations in their lawns and gardens, forcing them to use more expensive, less effective alternatives, turn to

illegal products or abandon control measures on their properties altogether.

And as we've seen in other jurisdictions, such as Ontario, bans themselves are cosmetic in nature. There simply aren't the resources available to enforce them and many homeowners turn to potentially dangerous homemade concoctions or illegally bring in pesticides from other jurisdictions. Polling in Ontario shows that more than half of homeowners are unhappy with the ban and want it changed. We have every reason to suspect that it would be a similar story in P.E.I. if a more restrictive ban was implemented.

By all means, readers can practice other techniques to keep their lawns and gardens healthy, but pesticide policy should be driven by sound science and science shows that pesticides can be safely used.

- Lorne Hepworth is president of CropLife Canada in Ottawa, representing the plant science industry