



Pesticide ban unwarranted

Raymond Yates

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Dear Editor:

Gardeners of the North Shore unite.

The Canadian Cancer Society is trying this year to convince the B.C. legislature to enact a law banning the use of pesticides in our gardens.

In a statement to the Vancouver Sun, Oct. 31, 2009, the CEO of the society's B.C. division, Barbara Kaminsky, stated: "We have waited long enough for this provincial government to act on this public health threat."

The story then quotes Kaminsky as saying that "pesticides can contain toxic chemicals that cause cancer."

Health Canada states that all pesticides in use today in Canada are "stringently regulated and go through critical scientific evaluation, including epidemiology, toxicology and environmental studies before they are allowed to be sold, to ensure that they do not pose health risks."

I have read reports on this subject from leading authorities, including the World Health Organization, the U.S. Dept. of Health and even from the Canadian Cancer Society's own website, and I have yet to find any evidence of scientific proof of Kaminsky's allegations.

In the words of one of her staff in response to my e-mail, "the research isn't conclusive, but there is evidence to show a possible link."

If the Canadian Cancer Society had just one documented case of human health damage directly attributable to a proper application of a pesticide, they would have published it with great fanfare before now. So, presumably, they do not have such proof. Instead, they are apparently satisfied with wielding their considerable corporate power, to eloquently convince our often gullible politicians to accede to their unfounded demands.

Considering the vast amount of resources, money and years of research so far spent by the many organizations whose mandate it is to determine a product's safety, one has to wonder why, if pesticides are such a "public health threat," they were not banned a long time ago -- by the World Health Organization for example.

The B.C. government is presently conducting a public consultation on this controversial subject, which ends on Feb. 15. I hope that you will join me in voicing your objection to this draconian and unnecessary ban. Otherwise yet another negatively biased special-interest group will control your life and your garden.

Instead of making unsubstantiated claims against garden pesticides, perhaps the Canadian Cancer Society should focus their attention and pursue a total ban against the many known carcinogens that are present in everyday products, such as alcohol, tobacco and gasoline.

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