

Weekly Update: Make Your Voice Heard

1 message

Paul Tukey <paul@safelawns.org> Sun, Mar 21, 2010 at 9:43 PM

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Whew. What a week. While I was spending the early part of the week in Saskatchewan and then the latter part in Chicago, the blogosphere was cranking with the news of the proposed TruGreen/ChemLawn sponsorship of Earth Day. Our SafeLawns member Risa Edelstein posted a Facebook page about this absurdity within minutes of my Weekly Update last Monday. The 500-and-counting fans of the page are giving the leadership of the Earth Day Foundation an earful, that's for sure. Please join the page yourself if you're a member of Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/STOPTruGreen?ref=mf>.

THAT WAS A GREAT MOVE by Risa, but as of Friday, Earth Day had still not renounced the partnership with ChemLawn — despite the news that the billion-dollar company had been fined a half million dollars for the state of New York for applying pesticides on windy, rainy days and for using undocumented, untrained workers. Here's the story about the fine: <http://www.safelawns.org/blog/index.php/2010/03/chemlawn-fined-500000/> and here's my update about the situation as we know it right now: <http://www.safelawns.org/blog/index.php/2010/03/report-earth-day-renounces-chemlawn/>. The latter link contains the contact information for Earth Day. PLEASE make your voice heard.

WITH SOME TIME ON MY HANDS in the snow in Chicago on Saturday, I sat down and put together some thoughts about the ChemLawn situation: <http://www.safelawns.org/blog/index.php/2010/03/chemlawnss-new-pr-blitz-they-just-dont-get-it/>. I know many, many lawn care companies are making a good-faith effort to improve their practices and to be more environmentally friendly. I truly do not believe ChemLawn — now TruGreen — is one of them.

THE FILM, A CHEMICAL REACTION (www.chemicalreactionmovie.com) and the SafeLawns movement had a tremendous reception last week in Saskatchewan, one of the provinces in Canada that does not yet have a ban on cosmetic pesticides to kill weeds on lawns and gardens. We did several radio and television interviews and had great turnouts in both Saskatoon and Regina, but the most memorable part of the trip for me was a seminar I delivered to a group of landscape professionals — virtually none of whom had ever tried using compost tea, compost or any natural approaches to lawn care. All they needed was a little encouragement; many of the attendees are ready to purchase tea brewers and begin their own career transitions. We sold out of two full cases of books (<http://www.safelawns.org/organic-lawn-caremanual.cfm>). There was also loads of interest in www.firebellylawncare.com, www.drearth.com, and www.chickitydoodoo.com.

BEFORE THE CHEMLAWN/EARTHDAY FIASCO, the subject that had many of us fired up was the illconceived sponsorship of Major League Baseball by Scotts Miracle Gro. A letter has been sent to Major League Baseball demanding that the league renounce the deal, but it has been categorically ignored thus far. A press release went out last week that hasn't really piqued the interest of the national media in the way we thought it might. To combat the widespread apathy, an on-line petition has been posted and we ask any concerned citizens, parents, environmentalists to sign the petition and disseminate it widely: <http://www.safelawns.org/blog/index.php/2010/03/media-hits-major-league-baseball-more/>. I was asked last week how I deal with all the pushback from the chemical companies and still get out of bed every day. My response? It's not the resistance from the chemical companies that can get me down; if anything gives me pause, it's the apathy from the public about the issue of pesticide use on lawns and gardens. Most people think these products are fine. We need to use all the social networking tools at our disposal to continue to make a dent in the apathy — because we don't have millions of dollars to throw at corporate sponsorships.

THE MOST POWERFUL TOOL WE HAVE continues to be Brett Plymale's film, A Chemical Reaction. This coming week is like many of the others so far in March . . . almost a screening a day somewhere in the U.S. Here's a link to this week's schedule: <http://www.safelawns.org/blog/index.php/2010/03/nextweek-three-great-film-festivals-well-be-at-all-of-them/>. And as always, the overall schedule can be found here: <http://www.safelawns.org/blog/index.php/calendar/>. We're particularly excited to have three Maine dates coming up so that some of our local friends and family can see the film for the first time: Brunswick, March 23, South Portland, March 31, and Yarmouth, April 1. And we hope to fill the Globe Theater in Washington, D.C., to the rafters this coming Friday at 6:30.

IF ANYONE HAS SCHEDULED a private or community screening and you don't see it on our calendar,

please let us know right away and we'll get it up there. We also have electronic posters available that can be customized and printed by your group. Just send me an email.

WE SHOULD BE VIRTUALLY CAUGHT UP WITH SHIPPING of films and books. If you feel your film or book is late, let me know and we'll get these right out to you.

Have a great week. Happy belated St. Patty's Day to all the Irish and near Irish!:

<http://www.safelawns.org/blog/index.php/2010/03/in-honor-of-st-patty-celebrate-clover/>

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