



Issues » Health » Our projects » Go Pesticide-Free!

Banning cosmetic pesticides in B.C.

The BC government has promised that "British Columbians will be consulted on new statutory protection of the environment from cosmetic chemical pesticides" (Speech from the Throne, August 25, 2009).

This is a step in the right direction! Canada's two largest provinces — Quebec and Ontario — have already banned the sale of many landscaping pesticides. It's time for BC to catch up!

The so-called cosmetic use of pesticides to improve the appearance of lawns and gardens poses unnecessary health and environmental risks. In a systematic review of scientific literature, the Ontario College of Family Physicians found "consistent links to serious illnesses, such as cancer, reproductive problems and neurological diseases" associated with exposure to pesticides. Children are particularly vulnerable.

A David Suzuki Foundation investigation of the incidence of acute pesticide poisonings in Canada found 10 acute pesticide poisonings in British Columbia in one year. In 44% of these cases, the victims were children under the age of six.

In addition to human health risks, pesticides also threaten pollinators, helpful insects essential to our food system. Large amounts of certain pesticides are known to affect bee longevity, memory, navigation and foraging abilities.

These risks are unnecessary. Organic gardening techniques and alternative products are effective and safe.

Pesticide bans work!

In Quebec, the number of households with a lawn or garden using chemical pesticides dropped dramatically in 2007, one year after provincial regulations prohibiting the use and sale of many lawn pesticides were fully implemented. In BC, despite a province-wide ban, 25 percent of BC households with a lawn or garden still use chemical pesticides. (Sustainable Households and the Environment, 2007)

Momentum for a ban on lawn and garden pesticides in BC is building.

- More than 25 BC municipalities have adopted by-laws restricting the use of pesticides on private and public property. For the latest count, check [here](#).
- In 2008, BC mayors and councillors passed a collective resolution asking the provincial government to implement a province-wide ban. The support was overwhelming—only a single delegate voted against the motion. Read the full report. The Union of British Columbia Municipalities affirmed their call for a province-wide cosmetic pesticide ban at the 2009 convention.
- The Canadian Cancer Society and other prominent health organizations — joined by the David Suzuki Foundation — issued a statement for a ban on cosmetic pesticides as part of a strategy to reduce environmental exposures to carcinogenic pesticides (April 20th, 2009)
- An unprecedented coalition of 19 health, environmental, and animal welfare organizations have issued a statement calling for a comprehensive ban on the use and sale of cosmetic pesticides in BC.

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/health/projects/go-pesticide-free-1/banning-cosmetic-pesticides-in-bc/>