

# THE NATURE OF THINGS

WITH DAVID SUZUKI

**WATCH THURSDAYS AT 8 P.M.**

## Dad and the Dandelions

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Thursday, March 2nd, 2017 At 8 PM On CBC-TV

The Nature Of Things With David Suzuki

Produced By Canadian Broadcasting Corporation ( CBC )

**CAN WE LIVE WITH A FEW MORE  
DANDELIONS ON THE GOLF COURSE?**



BY ANDREW NISKER, FILMMAKER

Growing up, my father handed out health advice to anybody who would listen — “father knew best”. We all marveled at how it seemed the older he got, the more he moved. In his retirement, winters were spent as a ski guide and summers playing golf — a sport he had played six days a week for over 40 years of his life. We always joked he spent more time on the golf course than at home or at the office.

In reality, I was glad he played a sport that allowed him to spend time outdoors, enjoying nature, the sun, and the fresh air. Most of all, it was an activity that we were able to share, as my brothers and I practically grew up on the golf course with Dad.

So when he got sick with non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and slowed down, I had lots of questions. How could a person who lived a healthy, active lifestyle get a blood cancer? I had barely even heard of non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma at the time. The documentary, ***Dad And The Dandelions*** is constructed around my initial need to find out the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of this disease.



**SCENE FROM THE FILM: "Is playing in the great outdoors on treated fields of grass as healthy as my dad and I thought?"**

My journey revealed much to me about how little we know about the complex causes of cancers and how to assess risk factors for such diseases. My father never had an organ transplant and wasn't HIV positive: two risk factors for lymphoma. I soon discovered his type of cancer might be linked to pesticide exposure — but how might that have happened? He didn't work with chemicals and never lived on or near a farm. I had to know more; I had so many questions.

My search, to my surprise, took me back into the world of golf. In this world of pearl white bunkers and putting greens that look and feel like velvet, I discovered that these "green spaces" are usually anything but. 'Championship' perfection requires the use of pesticides.

Even though I am an environmental filmmaker, I still thought of golf courses as green spaces and that their manicured perfection was just reflecting the gold standard of turf we see on TV. Now that I know more about golf's war on weeds, those perfectly manicured, blemish-free lawns and golf courses make me suspicious. Where are the dandelions?

Cancer usually develops over many years and I learned how difficult it is to say precisely why an individual person gets a certain cancer. That leaves all of us to decide: which 'side' of risk do we want to be on? Author Rachel Carson mused, while writing her seminal book *Silent Spring* over fifty years ago, that the world is divided into two groups: those who accept risks and those who err on the side of caution.

“So can golfers learn to tolerate a few more weeds? Can they learn to kick the chemical habit?”

We're not eating grass. So can golfers learn to tolerate a few more weeds? Can they learn to kick the chemical habit? Massive industries, such as the pesticide and golf industries, can't change overnight. It often comes down to the consumers influencing change with their wallets. Moving forward, I will play on public courses that tend to use less chemicals, and courses that are trying to encourage players to be more brown spot and weed tolerant. If enough fellow golfers (and the next generation of them) decide to make this choice as well, then the industries will no doubt have to make a shift.

**MORE:**

Watch ***Dad and the Dandelions***

Like my father, I'm health conscious. But while my father took supplements and vitamins, he but didn't give a thought to the risk the environment could present. As a father to young children, I make sure we eat organic when possible, use safer cleaning products, and try to be conscious of what we're exposed to in general. Why should the way we enjoy our sports and pastimes be any different?

Today, I am firmly on the 'side' of risk where I err on the side of caution.

***Dad And The Dandelions*** is the story of how I got here.

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## Responses By NORAHG FON, Golf-Hating Fanatics, & The Public

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- **Norah G Fon**

BOTH CBC & SUZUKI MUST BE STOPPED, FOREVER !

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation ( CBC ) asks the question — Can We Live With A Few More Dandelions On The Golf Course ?!?! The answer is — This Is None Of CBC's Business ! CBC is victimizing those people whose employment and well-being relies upon the golf industry. Is this really true ?!?! YES ! This is a fact as corroborated by CBC's recent fake-news documentary against the golf industry. Clearly, CBC, like David Suzuki, hates golfers and despises the game of golf. Both intend to destroy golf businesses ! They are calling on all provinces to expand their anti-pesticide prohibitions against ALL golf courses. They have also stated that they DO NOT want any exception statuses for the golf industry. Both CBC and Suzuki must be stopped, forever !

As always, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation ( CBC ) continues to operate as the media shield for left-wing golf-hating organizations, like David Suzuki Foundation. Clearly, CBC is interfering with partisan politics, and is in violation of its own code of conduct. Health Canada, and NOT Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and NOT its own David Suzuki, has the essential expertise on the subject of pest control products used by the golf industry. There is NOT ONE KNOWN INCIDENT OF HARM from the proper use of pest control products used in the Urban Landscape. Pest control products are scientifically-safe, and will NOT cause harm to people, animals, or the environment.

Expanding anti-pesticide prohibitions against ALL golf courses is unnecessary since pest control products are scientifically-safe, practically-non-toxic, and will cause NO harm.

<http://pesticidetruths.com/> WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G

- **donna gregoire**

....dandelions are very invasive...so its not a case of living with a few more...on a high end golf course that has limited use and good expensive maintenance maybe they can be controlled but on a stressed course or for example a well used soccer field natural grass will not keep these weeds at bay...and test cases like Calgary play grounds have ended in disaster.....

- **Grayson Maxwell**

@donna gregoire

You said (quote) "Calgary playgrounds have ended in disaster?"

Really? Some yellow flowers (that make a very healthy tea) are your version of disaster? You have obviously led a very easy life.

Were you one of the 5,000 cranky people who called the City of Calgary last year to complain about their neighbours who had dandelions in their back yards or complain about the dandelions in city ditches and playgrounds? The Calgary playgrounds that I went to with my nieces and nephews after they eliminated dandelion spraying have still looked wonderful to me over the past six years.

- **Ron Eaton**

A section of farm land that we all eat off of has more chemical sprayed on it than a Golf course does. Golf courses use less than 1 % of pesticides used in Canada, the rest goes on to food farms.

- **Richard E Daniels**

@Ron Eaton I did not realize we had so many golf courses using your math if the courses used only 1 % of the pesticides we would not be able to see the grass for the pesticides as far as the 99% of pesticides that are used on farms some of these chemicals are bioaccumulative in lipids so they can cause harm a mouthful at a time. Pharmaceutical companies are using acetylcholine inhibitors as medications yet this basically is the same product that they use in the crop and turf science industry to kill

pests. These medications are classed as anticholinergics, interesting but scary reading!

- **Norah G Fon**

RESPONSE TO EATON --- Golf facilities may be using up to six per cent of all pest control products.

<http://pesticidetruths.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Force-Of-Nature-Manitoba-Conspiracy-2012-05-23-Looming-Shipwreck-Golf-Uses-Six-Per-Cent-Of-All-Pesticides-Used-pdf.pdf>

- **Bryan Hunter**

This article and doc are extremely short sighted and narrow-scoped. I am an industry professional with a degree in the subject; in fact in my final year I wrote a 50pg thesis on this very topic "the perception and reality of pesticides". In one of the clips shown one gentleman refers to golf courses as "toxic waste dumps"... this is not just wrong but completely irresponsible.

As a previous commenter said; golf courses don't \*want\* to spray pesticides. They are extremely expensive, as is the labour and equipment to apply them.

If simply playing golf regularly was enough to cause cancer; do you not think there would be an OBVIOUS trend among golfers, grounds workers and superintendents to die of cancer? But there isn't... save skin cancer from exposure to the sun; but that's another article entirely.

These clips and articles, as the title suggests focuses almost entirely on weeds;

What if I told you that herbicides are not by any stretch the most sprayed pesticide on a golf course... that honour falls to fungicides. Which are not sprayed for aesthetic reasons, but for function and economical reasons - fungal diseases can wipe out a golf course overnight and cost its members/owners hundreds of thousands of dollars. This is not theatric hyperbole; its reality... don't believe me google "Pythium Blight on turf"

That said, fungicides are also among the safest. Most are very species specific; have extremely high LD and LC50's and have minimal impact on the soil ecology.

That; unlike this article and video, can be proven and backed up with scientific

evidence, and is supported by the Canadian Government, and the IPM Agency of Ontario which (by the way) is dedicated to continually reducing the need for pesticides on golf courses.

- **Sheryl McCumsey**

@Bryan Hunter First of all there is a very large body of evidence linking the pesticides used on a golf course and many serious illnesses including cancer. When you call yourself an "industry professional with a degree" we can be sure you are not talking about human health. (Horticulture and turf grass management is not going to teach you about epidemiology) There are golf courses that have decided to go organic.....not many but it is certainly possible. People have to decide for themselves if they value their health and personally I would rather not take advice from people who profit from "industry". Toxicology is only one measurement for the harm toxins can do AND studies are only done on the active ingredients not the formulations which have additives like surfactants which can increase toxicity 5 times. Currently the Pest Management Regulatory Agency is dealing with several lawsuits in regards to pesticides on the market that have not had the required science submitted and many which are overdue for an evaluation by decades. It is sad but true that this agency is not doing the job most people think they are doing. In France if you develop Parkinson's and have been exposed to pesticides they compensate you. There is no "science" that will support an argument that pesticides do not have a real risk to our health and to the environment.

- **Richard E Daniels**

@Sheryl McCumsey . There is a reason that so many golfers eat ibuprofen like candy and why so many of them end up with kidney stones or worse! The same effects can be caused by pesticides especially the carbonyl derived products which have a tendency to scavenge human glutathione stores the mother of all antioxidants. When it comes to plants they basically have immune systems just like you and I so what is cytotoxic to a plant will also be cytotoxic to an animal

- **Richard E Daniels**

@Bryan Hunter Who marked your thesis, Dow, Monsanto ,Bayer Crop Sciences or BASF? Besides LD50 has absolutely zero meaning to a person that is immune compromised , you also mentioned the various toxic chemicals they use to maintain the

course many of those chemicals when used together can have synergistic effects when combined I golf a lot but I will not golf until at least 2 days after any spray program especially when they are spraying the greens with fungicides. Hell the government allowed for the spraying of agent orange along roadsides. Dow must have supported the government that was in at the time.

- **Norah G Fon**

RESPONSE TO DANIELS --- Your allegations are patently false and borders on lunacy ! Additionally, plants and people are NOT the same. Pest control products used in the Urban Landscape SELECTIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY CONTROL disease, insect, and weed pests, but are COMPLETELY SAFE for other non-target organisms — they DO NOT INJURE TURFGRASSES, and have NO persistence beyond season of use. These products can be USED SAFELY because the amount required to affect human health is SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER than any potential level of exposure. There is NOT ONE KNOWN INCIDENT OF HARM from the proper use of pest control products used in the Urban Landscape.

- **Norah G Fon**

RESPONSE TO DANIELS ---- If someone has THAT high a degree of immunity failure, they have MUCH BIGGER PROBLEMS to deal with than golf facilities. As for synergistic effects, PROVE IT ! THAT is unfounded conjecture merely designed to alarm and enrage the public. You are spreading false-facts, and, by all appearances, KNOW NOTHING about the golf industry.

- **Norah G Fon**

RESPONSE TO McCUMSEY --- McCUMSEY KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THE GOLF INDUSTRY ! McCumsey should leave science to the REAL experts. She is a mere paranoid conspiracy theory fanatic who has NO faith in any REAL scientific expertise, other than her own less-than-mediocre understanding of the issues as an uneducated masseuse. She has NO recognized expertise, NO training, and NO background in matters concerning the golf industry. Her opinions carry NO CREDIBILITY and are WORTHLESS. McCumsey is a MERE student in massage therapy and footwear. Thanks to McCumsey and her operatives at Pesticide Free Alberta and Occupy Edmonton, Edmontonians are being forced to live in urban green spaces that have

become dangerous and pest-infested garbage dumps ! McCumsey is NOT to be trusted !

Links Concerning McCumsey Terrorizing Her Neighbors —

<http://pesticidetruths.com/2014/03/05/audio-sheryl-mccumsey-extreme-activist-neighbor-making-us-sick-with-round-up-university-of-quelph-industry-shills/>

<http://pesticidetruths.com/2014/06/19/norahg-responds-to-sheryl-mccumsey-deception-with-false-allegations-2014-06-18/>

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## Expanded Response

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**NORAHG Response**

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Please explore the following links ...

✓ -- Pesticides Are Scientifically Safe -- Less Lethal To Humans Than Caffeine -- [BLOG](#)

<http://pesticidetruths.com/2014/03/01/pesticides-are-scientifically-safe-safe-to-use-less-lethal-to-humans-than-caffeine-2014-02-27/>

✓ -- Pesticides Are Scientifically Safe -- Children Are Not At Risk From Pesticides -- Dangerous Playing Surfaces Are Created By #@!!% Pesticide Bans ! -- Exploiting Children As Weapons Of Coercion -- [WEB-PAGE](#)

<http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/children-are-not-at-risk/>

✓ -- Pesticides Are Scientifically Safe -- Pesticides Are Evaluated As Acceptable For Continued Registration By Health Canada -- [BLOG](#)

<http://pesticidetruths.com/2013/06/25/pesticides-evaluated-as-acceptable-for-continued-registration-by-health-canada-2013-03-31/>

✓ -- Pesticides Are Scientifically Safe -- Real Trends AGAINST Pesticide Bans -- Victories Against Terrorists -- Our Children Are Safe When Pesticide Bans Are Stopped -- [BLOG WITH POSTERS](#)

<http://pesticidetruths.com/2012/10/11/posters-there-is-a-real-trend-against-pesticide-bans-victories-against-terrorists-our-children-are-safe-when-pesticide-bans-are-stopped-2012-10-11/>

✓ -- Catastrophic Carnage Inflicted By Garbage Dump Green Spaces -- Pesticide Bans Have Never Made Our Green Spaces Look So #@!!% Ugly, Including Golf Courses -- [PHOTO GALLERY](#)

<http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/carnage-leading-to-garbage-dump-green-spaces-photo-gallery/>



