



## Quebec beefs up pesticide ban

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A new era in pesticide use has begun in Quebec with the banning of many domestic products that have chemicals considered toxic to humans and the environment.

The third and final phase of Quebec's Pesticide Management Code, first introduced in March 2003, went into effect yesterday.

With its ban on 20 active ingredients, 210 lawn-care products are now off the market, giving Quebec the toughest standards in North America.

Home gardeners may no longer use such popular herbicides as Green Cross Killex,

C-I-L Tri-Kill and Weedex that contain 2,4-D to rid lawns of dandelions and other weeds. Insecticides such as Sevin that include Carbaryl are also banned.

The move was hailed by concerned physicians and environmentalists.

The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, based in Toronto, said the code makes Quebec a leader in protecting human and animal health.

"This bold action ... sets a standard for excellence that other governments ignore at their peril," said Warren Bell, an association board member.

Although Health Canada last month said 2,4-D is safe to use on lawns and turf "when label directions are followed," the association warned pesticides have been linked to childhood cancer, birth defects and neurological disease.

Michel Gaudet, president of the Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, said that Quebec law is now in line with 2,4-D prohibitions in effect in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

"Sweden prohibited 2,4-D in 1977 and 12 years later they noted the increase in some of their cancers started to go down," he said.

Such firms as Rona and Reno-Depot, which also owns Botanix, and supplies as many as 400 outlets in Quebec, knew the ban was coming and began reducing inventory last fall, spokesperson Sylvain Cloutier said.

Unused stock was transferred for sale in company stores in Ontario and western provinces, where 2,4-D may be sold.

Don Cerone, merchandiser at its head-office nursery, said the ban means gardeners will have to get back to basics.

"To have a healthy lawn, you need good soil, add lots of grass seed, and use fertilizer to put nutrients in your soil."

The basic principle is "the more dense your grass, the less room there is for weeds," he said.

Environment Canada suggests mowing less often so grass can be six centimetres tall to crowd out weeds and build deeper roots.

As for getting rid of weeds, "the best way is pulling them out," Cerone said.

"Technically, there are no safe products that have yet to be approved" for sale in Quebec, he added.

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