

Judy Wigmore, Pesticide Free BC Webmaster
Nov 17, 2011 Presentation to the Special Committee on Cosmetic Pesticides

Thank you to the Chair and Committee Members for this opportunity to make my presentation to the Special Committee on Cosmetic Pesticides.

I am Judy Wigmore, webmaster of the Pesticide Free BC website. I live in Interior BC, in the Kamloops - South Thompson Riding.

The Pesticide Free BC website has been my family's project since April 2009. My daughter set up the website with the help of a teacher. I research and post the information that is on it.

The website is an information source for those who want a cosmetic pesticide ban in BC.

My family has known for years that safer, less toxic pesticides are sold and used elsewhere in Canada and we want the same for BC. We have never accepted money for our efforts from any person or group.

I became aware of the limitations of municipal bylaws when advocating for a Pesticide Free Kamloops in 2005 and realized that a provincial ban is the only way to protect our vulnerable children, our pets and the environment from exposure to harmful cosmetic pesticides.

Today, I will address seven topics:

1. Cosmetic Pesticide Use.
2. Seven Provincial Bans – Which Should BC Follow?
3. BC needs a “No IPM” ban.
4. Industry Opposition in BC.
5. Why IPM is Increased Pesticide Misuse.
6. Pesticide Free Initiatives in BC.
7. BC's Sale and Use Ban – What Needs to be in the Legislation?

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1. Cosmetic Pesticide Use

Cosmetic pesticides are non-essential, synthetic chemical products used to improve the appearance of landscapes . . . our lawns, gardens, driveways, patios, golf courses, sports fields, parks, school yards and playgrounds.

Pesticides kill. This is what they are designed to do.

Pesticides can continue to harm long after the initial "kill" as ingredients do not stay where they are used, whether by a resident or an IPM landscaper or applicator.

This is why cosmetic pesticides cannot be "properly" or "safely" applied and should only be used in emergency situations, such as a serious pest infestation which threatens the health of people or public safety.

See [Pesticides, Making the right choice for the Protection of Health and the Environment](#) May 2000. Section 12.8. A Report by the federal Parliamentary [Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development](#)

Rarely are lawn and garden pests a threat to human health or public safety. However, because of the ubiquitous use of harmful cosmetic pesticides, governments across Canada and elsewhere in the world have taken action to protect their citizens and the environment.

2. Seven Provincial Bans – Which Should BC Follow?

Seven provinces have banned cosmetic pesticides approved by Health Canada because of concerns about risk to human health and the environment:

Alberta 2010

Newfoundland & Labrador 2012

New Brunswick 2009

Nova Scotia 2010

Ontario 2009

PEI 2009

Quebec 2003

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BC must not follow Alberta's [Weed N Feed 2010](#) ban as it is too limited.

BC must not follow the IPM "bans" in [New Brunswick 2009](#) and [PEI 2010](#).

These provinces allow continued IPM cosmetic pesticide use and have numerous exemptions, including continued use on school yards, sports fields and playgrounds.

Allowing IPM pesticide use does NOT protect vulnerable children, pets or the environment.

Newfoundland and Labrador's 2012 ban comes into effect for next year's lawn care season and is limited in that it only bans the use of 5 ingredients, although they are significant toxic products approved by Health Canada:

Carbaryl, 2,4-D (2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid), Mecoprop, Dicamba, MCPA (2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxyacetic acid); these last three ingredients are "Weed N Feed" products.

BC needs to follow the precautionary sale and use approach used by [Nova Scotia 2010](#), [Ontario 2008](#) and [Quebec 2003](#).

I want to provide the Committee with an analysis of the seven provincial bans and their characteristics. This analysis is not available today but will be submitted before your December 19th deadline.

The point I want to make is that BC has three good provincial examples to follow. This makes your decision easier than if we were the first province to consider this important public health and environmental protection issue.

3. BC needs a "No IPM" Ban

A BC ban that allows continued IPM pesticide use should not be on the table.

Unfortunately, IPM is entrenched as part of "normal" lawn and garden care in BC.

In 2003, BC passed North America's first IPM legislation to regulate the sale, use and handling of pesticides by the Ministry of Environment under the [Integrated Pest Management Act 2003](#) (IPM Act) and [Regulation 604/2004](#).

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Our Ministry of Environment's brochure says that IPM is "Safe. Effective. Responsible":

"IPM is a practical decision-making process that relies on a wide variety of tools to promote healthy plants and to manage pests.

It is an effective, science-based approach that reduces the unnecessary spraying of pesticides around your home."

IPM principles are based on 5 progressive steps:

1. Identification of the pest problems.
2. Determination of what pests can be tolerated.
3. Taking action to prevent pest problems. . . .use physical and mechanical controls, including lower risk products.
4. Using pesticide treatment as last resort
5. Ongoing evaluation to determine effectiveness of methods.

Unfortunately, the chemical landscape industry uses the IPM approach as a means to justify pesticide use as part of "normal" lawn and garden care.

This means the continued use of harmful killers, like 2,4-D, Dicamba, and MCPP . . . known carcinogens, neurotoxins and hormone disruptors.

In BC, as I have said, our Ministry of Environment concurs with the chemical landscaping industry's approach that the "proper" and "safe" way to use pesticides is by trained and licensed IPM applicators.

It is important that the Committee knows that Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec's ban legislation are not based on IPM principles. Instead, these Governments have decided that many cosmetic pesticides approved by Health Canada are **NOT** necessary for beautiful, healthy, disease - resistant landscapes.

These Governments have chosen to focus on sustainable, non-toxic alternatives for healthy lawns and gardens in their provinces.

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The Ontario Ministry of the Environment's approach to lawn and garden care is not the same as our Ministry of Environment.

Ontario's [Pesticide website](#) states:

“The McGuinty Government believes that the use of cosmetic pesticides presents an unnecessary risk to our families and our pets, especially when we can have healthier lawn and gardens without chemicals.

We have listened to medical experts – like the Canadian Cancer Society – who have made a convincing case for reducing our exposure to pesticides, particularly children who are generally more susceptible to the potential toxic effects of pesticides.”

This unnecessary risk is why the Ontario Government's 2008 ban on the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides came into effect April 22, 2009.

IPM practices are also **not** included in Nova Scotia's Dec 2010 sale and use pesticide regulations.

IPM companies must use the same "allowable" products as everyone else on residential, commercial, government and institutional properties.

Nova Scotia's ban came into effect earlier this year, on April 1, 2011.

For Nova Scotia's allowable pesticides list, [click here](#). For exceptions, [click here](#).

Quebec was the first province to ban the sale of 20 active carcinogenic ingredients and over 200 pesticide products containing known carcinogens . . . like Killex, Roundup and Weed N Feed products with 2, 4-D, Dicamba and MCPP.

Quebec's April 3, 2003 Pesticide Management Code was phased in over 3 years and was done without using IPM principles. For Code info, [click here](#)

IPM is not the only way to approach pest management and this mindset must be “unlearned”.

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All three provinces have terrific on-line “pesticide free” information to help residents, landscaping companies and other stakeholders transition to sustainable organic landscaping:

- See Nova Scotia’s Department of Environment "[Healthy Lawns for a Healthier Nova Scotia](#)" education campaign announced earlier this year, on March 22, 2011.
- See Ontario’s Ministry of Environment’s [Beautiful Lawns and Gardens Naturally](#) and information for [industries and institutions](#) and [homeowners](#).
- See Quebec’s [Gardening . . . all naturally](#).

4. Industry Opposition in BC

As we all know, the chemical landscaping industry is actively lobbying against a BC pesticide ban.

This industry's position is the same as our Ministry of Environment's:

Cosmetic pesticides are safe as Health Canada has approved them and can be "properly applied" by trained and licensed IPM applicators.

It is interesting that, in Nova Scotia all landscaping companies (and everyone else) must use the same [allowable products](#) as of April 1, 2011.

Nova Scotia’s chemical landscaping industry, led by Landscape Nova Scotia, publicly supported their Department of the Environment’s “Healthy Lawns for a Healthier Nova Scotia” education campaign.

(See the Government’s [March 22, 2011 news release](#)).

In Ontario, Communities in Bloom were “delighted to be involved in helping Ontarians achieve a pesticide-free landscape”.

Landscape Ontario also supported Ontario’s ban – a ban that **does not allow** IPM applicators to use cosmetic pesticides (except for a few specified exemptions).

Both of these landscaping industry leaders supported Ontario’s ban and are quoted in the Ontario Government’s [April 2008](#) and [April 2009](#) ban news releases.

This supportive industry approach to Pesticide Free initiatives makes me ask why, when you go over the Rockies, is there a different attitude here?

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5. Why IPM is Increased Pesticide Misuse

As mentioned in my introduction, I live in Kamloops where we have the worst kind of pesticide bylaw, the kind I call “not recommended”:

- Residents may use excluded pesticides as permitted under Schedule 2 of BC’s IPM Act (the “lower risk” ingredients).
- Residents are banned from using any other products to control pests on ornamental trees, shrubs, flowers and turf on their properties.
- Approved landscape applicators may continue to use cosmetic pesticides like 2,4-D, Carbaryl, Dicamba, Glyphosate, Malathion, Mecoprop (MCP) and Permethrin.

These ingredients are banned in BC’s 18 “better protection” bylaw communities and under provincial bans.

In early August this summer, when I came home in the evening I was surprised to see a pesticide application sign on our neighbour’s lawn for a 7 am application the next day using Trillion and Touchdown Glyphosate.

Our elderly neighbour had called an “ecology friendly lawn care” company and asked how to get rid of his dandelions.

He had no idea that the recommended products likely contributed to my daughter’s Multiple Chemical Allergies and her anaphylaxis to airborne volatile organic chemicals (VOCs).

I told our neighbour that, if the spraying happened, our daughter would never be coming over again as the risk of pesticide residue exposure was too great for her. The VOCs in pesticide products and their residue could cause an anaphylactic reaction.

I also would never be coming over to hug him or put the garbage out as we cannot risk tracking pesticide residue into our home.

If there was a wind in the morning, I would be asking that spraying not happen.



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We have been “Pesticide Free” for the 8 years we have lived in our home and do not want our lawn contaminated with pesticides from our neighbours.

Our daughter’s 1,500 square foot organic garden was also at risk of pesticide drift.

She would not be able to sell her heritage tomatoes or 75 bean varieties at the Kamloops Farmers Market if pesticide residue drifted over her garden.

Happily, our neighbour chose not to spray after hearing my concerns. He tearfully told me he would never do anything to harm my daughter.

Our neighbour had assumed, as most people would, that an “ecology friendly lawn care” company would not be putting harmful poisons on our lawns and gardens.

I confirmed the next morning that, of course, the company follows IPM practices and that their assessment of our neighbour’s dandelion problem was done by phone.

No one came to see our neighbour’s lawn, except to put up the spray sign.

No one took the time to figure out why the 8 to 10 dandelions were there.

If IPM practices had been followed, the lawn company would have determined that:

- The lawn gets a brush cut every Friday, whether it needs cutting or not.
- Clippings are not left to mulch in and decompose. They are collected and taken to the City’s grass clippings disposal facility.
- The lawn is watered every other day, regardless if it is raining or needed.

No wonder there are a few dandelions as this approach to lawn care is the exact opposite of what is needed for healthy lawn. We know the mantra . . .

- Cut your grass high, about 3 inches.
- Leave clippings to mulch into the ground to create an organic humus layer.
- Water only once a week for an inch. That’s all a lawn usually needs. Use a tuna container as your guide – it’s pretty simple.

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Touchdown and Trillion are banned in BC's 18 "better protection" bylaw communities and across Canada.

To use these toxic products for a few dandelions on my neighbour's lawn is a perfect example that IPM does not work in practice.

IPM's "five steps" are rarely used for lawn and garden care. We have all seen the spray trucks drive up, do one lawn and move on to do the exact same thing down the street. How can one spray solve all problems?

This is why, to me, IPM is really "increased pesticide misuse".

The only place for IPM practices in a BC pesticide ban is as a requirement for golf courses and other turf facilities, with documented compliance procedures.

6. Pesticide Free Initiatives in BC

We have unwittingly accepted the chemical landscaping industry's over-use and abuse of poisonous, non-essential chemicals as part of "normal" lawn and garden care.

In British Columbia, we need to "get it" that . . .

- An occasional weed is a sign of a healthy landscape.
- We need to get our lawns and gardens off chemical drugs and practice sustainable land care.
- We need to grow chemical-free lawns and plants that can survive in our different geographical regions.
- Our provincial Government needs to stop promoting "pest management" and "plant health", start promoting sustainable, lower risk landscaping practices and ban cosmetic pesticide use.
- BC needs to become "pesticide free".

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There are over [50 groups/associations](#) that support pesticide free initiatives across BC.

There are two noteworthy “grown in BC” initiatives that are cultivating sustainable, organic land care practices with their very successful education and organic land care courses:

[Gaia College](#) and [SOUL](#) (the Society for Organic Urban Land Care).

6.1 BC’s 39 Pesticide Bylaw Communities

Before I go through BC’s Pesticide Free initiatives, I want to highlight the current situation with BC’s pesticide bylaws as there are “lessons to be learned” from “not recommended” and “preferred” bylaws.

Over half of British Columbians (59%) live in 39 communities with pesticide bylaws.

Port Moody passed BC’s first bylaw in December 2003, with Pitt Meadows the last in September 2011.

The thirty nine bylaw communities are located in:

- the Lower Mainland (16 bylaws)
- on Vancouver Island (11 bylaws)
- on the Sunshine Coast (2 bylaws)
- in the Thompson/Okanagan (3 bylaws)
- in the Kootenay/Columbia Basin (6 bylaws)
- in North Western BC (1 bylaw)

6.2 “Not Recommended” Bylaw Communities

There are 21 “not recommended” bylaw communities where pesticide use continues by exemption or permit and this includes IPM practices.

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A third of BCers (34%) live in “not recommended” communities:

Burnaby, Cumberland, Fernie, Gibsons, Golden, Kamloops, Kelowna, Maple Ridge, Nelson, New Westminster, North Vancouver (City), North Vancouver (District), Oak Bay, Port Alberni, Port Moody, Saanich, Salmon Arm, Sechelt, Surrey, Victoria and West Vancouver (District).

Pesticide use continues under these conditions:

- On municipal lands, including sports fields and playgrounds . . . in Kamloops, Kelowna, North Vancouver (City and District), Oak Bay, Port Alberni, Saanich, Salmon Arm, Sechelt, Surrey and Victoria.
- By permitted exemption . . . in Fernie, Gibsons, Golden, Maple Ridge, Nelson, North Vancouver (City and District), Oak Bay and Sechelt.
- Residents can hire licensed IPM applicators to apply pesticides.

"Pay to spray" is **not** a ban as this approach allows continued pesticide use through IPM practices . . . in Kamloops, Kelowna, Port Alberni and Sechelt.

- For "hardened surfaces" like patios, driveways and sidewalks . . . in Burnaby, Cumberland, Delta, Golden, Kamloops, Maple Ridge, Port Moody, Salmon Arm, Surrey, Victoria and West Vancouver (District).

“Not recommended” bylaws usually set out these conditions for allowed (or exempted) pesticide use:

- Signs must be posted for date and time of a pending pesticide application and for post-application “stay off” warnings.
- Distance limitations for an application from specified facilities are established (usually for day cares, playgrounds, schools, bus stops, senior citizen residences, hospitals) and bodies of water.

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- Suitable weather conditions for a pesticide application are specified (usually wind and temperature limitations).
- A “Pesticide Permit Application” usually must be submitted to obtain prior approval to use pesticides. The permit form is attached as a bylaw schedule.

6.3 “Better Protection” Bylaw Communities

A quarter of BCers (25%) live in 18 "better protection" communities where pesticide use is banned on municipal and residential properties:

Comox, Courtenay, Delta, Esquimalt, Harrison Hot Springs, Invermere, Kimberley, Nanaimo, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam, Qualicum Beach, Revelstoke, Richmond, Terrace, Tofino, Vancouver (City), Whistler and White Rock.

The bylaw is usually short, easy to understand and sets out these precautionary conditions:

- Cosmetic pesticide use is banned within municipal boundaries – on public lands (municipal property) and private lands (residential property).
- Permitted, less-toxic pesticides are identified. This is based on Schedule 2 of BC’s IPM Act and listed in an attached schedule.
- Pesticides are allowed for the protection of human health and public safety, including swimming pool maintenance, water purification and animal infestations.
- Violations are based on complaints and followed up with fines.
- Implementation dates are usually phased: first for public lands, then for private lands.
- The ban excludes agricultural, institutional, commercial or industrial properties (day cares, school grounds, golf courses, university campuses, multi-residential buildings).

Municipalities cannot regulate pesticide use on these properties so residents may be exposed when on, or near, these properties. Private land owners may voluntarily stop using pesticides.

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The remaining BCers (41%) have no protection from harmful pesticide exposure as they live where there are no local regulations restricting pesticide use.

This patchwork of differing protection from harmful pesticide use is why provincial legislation is needed to protect **all** British Columbians and the environment.

6.4 Municipal Pesticide Free Programs

Just as there is a range of pesticide bylaws, there are differing municipal education programs.

"Plant health" programs should be avoided as these promote IPM practices and are found in communities that allow continued pesticide use on public and private lands.

"Pesticide free" programs are healthier and safer for our children, our pets and the environment and are usually found in BC's "better protection" bylaw communities.

Examples of terrific "Pesticide Free" programs and educational brochures are:

- Kelowna's [Healthy Yard tips](#), [You Tube videos](#) and [Pesticide Free workshops](#).
- The Lower Mainland's North Shore [Garden Smart Program](#) and the [City of Richmond](#) hold very successful sustainability workshops
- Nanaimo's [Go Natural, Go Pesticide Free for Healthy Lawns and Gardens](#) website.
- Revelstoke's info on landscaping problems, less toxic pesticides and natural solutions in their [Environmentally Friendly Pesticides](#) brochure.

Please see Appendix One for a list of 19 community "Pesticide Free" initiatives designed to get lawns and gardens of residents and businesses off chemicals.

I encourage Committee members to check out the communities near you and see "first hand" how easy it is to go "Pesticide Free".

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7. BC's Sale & Use Ban – What Needs to be in the Legislation?

Deciding what goes in BC's sale and use ban is quite simple from my perspective:

- Do you as a Committee support the precautionary approach used in Ontario, Nova Scotia and Quebec and ban the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides?

Or,

- Do you support the self-interested chemical landscaping industry and allow the continued use of cosmetic pesticides through exemptions?

The choice is simple. What kind of BC do you want?

- Do you want a Province where the precautionary approach is used to provide a safe and healthy environment for all?

Or,

- Do you want a Province that allows continued use of known carcinogens, hormone disruptors and neurotoxins when safer, less toxic alternatives are readily available?

In my opinion, we need a precautionary ban that provides effective protection for public health and the environment from cosmetic pesticide use.

This legislation should include the following:

- Ban the use of cosmetic pesticides on residential and non-residential lawns and gardens, including institutional, industrial, commercial and recreational properties.
- Establish classifications for what products and/or ingredients are allowed and those that are not allowed. Ontario's eleven classifications should be used as a guide.

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One classification must include a list of permitted, lower risk pesticides using Schedule 2 of BC's IPM Act. This list would need to be updated on a regular basis.

- Allow continued use for the protection of human health and public safety, including swimming pool maintenance, water purification and animal infestations.
- Require a 5 year phase-out of cosmetic pesticide use on golf courses and other turf facilities.

These facilities would be required to use IPM practices, with compliance procedures that are documented and reported on a regular basis.

- Require a public awareness and education campaign to assist residents, the chemical landscaping industry and other stakeholders transition to being "Pesticide Free".
- Allow municipalities to pass more restrictive bylaws, as is provided under the Quebec and Nova Scotia bans and BC's "smoke free" bylaws.
- Not apply to the agriculture or forestry industry.

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee for this opportunity to present my suggestions for BC's cosmetic pesticide ban.

At the 2008 UBCM's annual conference, then Kamloops Mayor Terry Lake championed the successful passage of a resolution asking that the province stop the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides with ban legislation as these products "present a threat to the environment, children, pets and personal health."

On April 5th of this year, Premier Clark and Environment Minister Lake announced they would protect sled dogs with the toughest legislation in Canada.

The same must be done with BC's cosmetic pesticide ban legislation to protect our vulnerable children, our pets and the environment.

Together, let's make BC pesticide free. Thank you.

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Appendix One: BC's Local Government "Pesticide Free" Initiatives

I have prepared a list of 19 community initiatives designed to get residential and business lawns and gardens off chemicals and transition to a sustainable "Pesticide Free" approach.

The community name is linked to the pesticide bylaw. A "*" beside a community means that the bylaw is not recommended.

Communities can have a "not recommended" bylaw but have a terrific Pesticide Free program. Burnaby, Kelowna and Port Moody are excellent examples of this situation.

Community Bylaw Pesticide Free Educational Program

Burnaby*	Let it Grow Naturally
Capital RD	Alternatives to Pesticides – It's Easy to Go Pesticide Free!
Comox	Comox Valley Regional District - Nature Works
Courtenay	Comox Valley Regional District - Nature Works
Cumberland*	Comox Valley Regional District - Nature Works
Delta	Natural Yard Care and Pesticide Info
Esquimalt	Sustainability & Environment - Pesticide Reduction
Invermere	Pesticide Alternatives brochure
Kelowna*	Pesticide Free

. . . continued



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Community Bylaw Pesticide Free Educational Program (continued)

Maple Ridge*	Partners with Campaign for Pesticide Reduction Maple Ridge (CPR! Maple Ridge)
Nanaimo	Go Natural, Go Pesticide Free for Healthy Lawns and Gardens
Nanaimo RD	TeamWater Smart Alternatives to Pesticides brochure
Nelson*	Pesticide Bylaw brochure
New Westminster*	Smart Gardening & Lawn Care brochure.
North Vancouver* (City)	Pesticide Use Control Bylaw North Shore GardenSmart Workshop Series
Port Moody*	Pesticide-free, naturally!
Qualicum Beach	Pesticide Use Bylaw
Revelstoke	Pesticide Use Bylaw No. 1988 brochure Environmentally Friendly Pesticides brochure
Richmond	Pesticide Use Restrictions Greener by Nature brochure

For the complete list of BC's 39 bylaws and their educational programs on the Pesticide Free BC website, [click here](#).

