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EDITORIAL: Join pesticide-free ranks

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Another Lower Mainland city has tabled a bylaw banning the cosmetic use of pesticides (chemical applications against plant, fungus, insect or animal pests) on both private and public land.

After being labelled "a laggard" last year by the chair of the city's Environmental Advisory Committee, Surrey has finally joined the ranks of 29 other B.C. communities, including 12 in the Lower Mainland, in instituting such regulations.

White Rock has pesticide legislation in place and Delta introduced a bylaw last November that will take effect this fall.

(Abbotsford has yet to join the ranks).

Most large home and garden centres have already stopped selling pesticides voluntarily. For some, not using harsh chemicals to control weeds and harmful insects will be difficult at first. Being able to spray and walk away has been a pain-free method for maintaining neat and tidy landscapes.

Even Surrey staff warned it will cost \$1 million annually to manually take care of pests and unwanted plants.

But the payoffs – in terms of a healthier environment (not to mention healthier gardeners) – will be immeasurable. In fact, once in tune with seasonal cycles, local green thumbs may find that natural methods of garden care work even better than poisonous ones.

A case in point: Observe the futile efforts of beleaguered homeowners trying to battle a chafer beetle infestation – which prompts crows, raccoons and skunks to pull up lawn sod, decimating yards in their quest for grubs.

Covering the grass with barriers, erecting scarecrows, resorting to chemicals... nothing seems to stop their lawns from becoming rototilled ruins.

A simple application of nematodes – microscopic organisms – in late July or early August will eliminate the problem. The nematodes attack developing chafer larvae. No grubs; no critter munch-fest.

It's Earth-friendly behaviour, that deserves a bylaw – in all cities.

– Black Press


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