

# Pesticides have harmful effects on health

BY CYNTHIA BRUNT, TIMES COLONIST MAY 13, 2012

Re: "We should not ban use of pesticides," May 8.

Hudson, Que., celebrated 20 years of being pesticide-free in 2011, much longer than the 12 years that the writer stated. It was the first community in Canada to ban the use of pesticides and was taken to court by large chemical companies.

The fight went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, where Hudson eventually won on the "precautionary principle," which declares that the chemical companies must prove "no harm."

The writer states that the prevalence of illness, such as cancer, has not changed in communities that ban pesticide use in comparison to those that use them, but there is research that shows a strong correlation between the use of pesticides and diseases such as cancer and Parkinson's disease. Once these chemicals find their way into our bodies, they are there throughout our lifetime.

The B.C. branch of the Canadian Cancer Society has been actively lobbying the provincial government to ban the use of cosmetic pesticides because of concern for health implications. The society commissioned a poll in February, 2011 of British Columbians and found that 70 per cent support a ban of cosmetic pesticides.

Pesticides not only affect the health of humans, but are also implicated in the death of bees and other pollinating insects, as well as birds.

Using these chemicals provides an easy way to deal with unwanted growth, but the ultimate price may not be worth the manicured lawn.

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