



Home > Consumer Product Safety > Pesticides & Pest Management > Growers & Commercial Users

Consumer Product Safety

Pollinator Protection

Pollinators are organisms that help transfer pollen from one flowering plant to another. This fertilizes plants so that they can produce seeds and fruit.

With over 700 native species in Canada, bees are the most common pollinators. Other pollinators include butterflies, moths, wasps, flies, some types of beetles, hummingbirds and certain bats. Bees and other insect pollinators are critical to the production of many crops and play an essential ecological role. Crops that depend on the work of pollinators include tree and berry fruit, canola, alfalfa, squash, and melon.

Pollinator Health and Pesticides

Declines in honeybee and other pollinator populations have generated considerable scientific and public interest both in Canada and internationally. A number of factors are seen as potential contributors to these declines and no single factor has been identified as the cause. The available science suggests that multiple factors acting in combination may be at play, including loss of habitat and food sources, diseases, viruses and pests, and pesticide exposure.

It is also known that certain pesticides can pose an immediate, or "acute", threat to bees. In order to protect pollinators, the labels of pesticides that pose such risks specify detailed use directions to reduce potential exposure. These include restrictions on pesticide spraying on flowering crops or weeds where bees may be present. All precautions and directions on pesticide labels should be followed.

Health Canada Activities

As the federal authority for pesticide regulation, Health Canada is actively working with key stakeholders as well as provincial agriculture and environment ministries to ensure agricultural practices across the country protect pollinators. It is also collaborating with other pesticide regulators internationally to refine pesticide risk assessment methods and data requirements so that the potential effects on bees are better understood and risks can be mitigated.

Risk Mitigation

Best Management Practices

The following best management practices include measures that can be taken by growers to protect bees and other insect pollinators including honeybees, from pesticide exposure.

- [Protecting Pollinators during Pesticide Spraying - Best Management Practices](#)
- [Pollinator Protection and Responsible Use of Treated Seed: Best Management Practices](#)

Other Risk Mitigation Documents

- [Notice of Intent: Action to Protect Bees from Exposure to Neonicotinoid Pesticides](#)
- [Pollinator Protection: Reducing Risk from Treated Seed](#)

External Resources

-  [How to Reduce Bee Poisoning from Pesticides](#), Oregon State University

-  [Pesticide Environmental Stewardship, Pollinator Protection section](#)

Reports

- [Evaluation of Canadian Bee Mortalities in 2013 Related to Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Interim Report as of September 26, 2013](#)
- [Evaluation of Canadian Bee Mortalities that Coincided with Corn Planting in Spring 2012](#)
- [Ontario Bee Incidents 2012 - Update](#)
- [Re-evaluation Note REV2013-15, Re-evaluation Update for Neonicotinoid Insecticides](#)
- [REV2012-02: Re-evaluation of Neonicotinoid Insecticides](#)

How to Report Suspected Pollinator Pesticide Poisonings

For bee poisonings related to pesticides, contact the appropriate federal or provincial authority:

- **British Columbia** (Ministry of Agriculture): 604-556-3129
- **Alberta** (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development): 780-415-2314
- **Saskatchewan** (Ministry of Agriculture): 306-953-2304
- **Manitoba** (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): 204-945-4825/204-945-3861
- **Ontario** (Health Canada): 519-826-2895
- **Québec** (Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation): 1-866-381-1717
- **Nova Scotia** (Department of Agriculture): 902-679-8998
- **Prince Edward Island** (Department of Agriculture and Forestry): 902-314-0816
- **New Brunswick** (Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries): 506-453-2108
- **Newfoundland and Labrador** (Department of Natural Resources): 709-637-2079

You can contact Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency at 1-800-267-6315.

More information about the Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency [Incident Reporting Program](#) and [how to report suspected incidents](#) is available on the Health Canada website.

Date Modified: 2014-01-08