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Green grass is pesticide-free

You detoxified your cleaning closet, rid your home of triclosan and filled it with air-cleansing plants. Your garden boasts an assortment of veggies and bee-friendly flowers and you never use pesticides. Your home is on its way to becoming a green haven!

But sometimes, you might sit on grass you don't maintain. Maybe you'll take off your shoes and dig in your toes. Your dog or kids might roll on it.

And it may have been treated with pesticides.

Even in the five provinces that ban cosmetic pesticides, regulatory loopholes—like the exception for golf courses and invasive species—mean you might dig your toes into toxic soup.

Research shows pesticide exposure increases the risk of cancer, birth defects and brain and nervous system disorders. Children are six times more likely to get childhood leukemia when pesticides are used in the home and garden, according to a U.S. National Cancer Institute study. One European review considers many widely used pesticides as neurodevelopmental poisons that may cause health effects even at low levels.

Pesticides are meant to kill. Many modern formulations were based on Second World War chemical warfare research into nerve gas.

This isn't beautiful. It's deadly.

Pesticides also threaten pollinators—helpful insects essential to our food supply. Even small amounts of certain chemicals affect bee longevity, memory, navigation and foraging.

So, what are you going to do about it?

If you're like me, you chose this lifestyle because you value environmental health, believe in living in harmony with the natural world and know it feels right to be green. You might not see yourself as an advocate or leader.

But you are, because you care about democracy, social justice and eco-friendly lawns. Embrace it!

Learn about pesticide policy where you live. Whether in the city with the highest concentration of pesticide use in Canada (Winnipeg) or the provinces with the most comprehensive policies (Nova Scotia and Ontario), there are improvements to be made at the local and provincial government levels.

1. Start close to home

- Organize your neighbours and declare your block a "Pesticide Free Zone".
- In municipalities with bans, certain pesticides may be permitted—that doesn't make them safe or necessary

2. **Talk to municipal representatives**

- Express your concern
- Ask them to stop using chemical pesticides, especially near schools

3. **Go to your province**

- Write politicians and tell them you support tighter controls over pesticides
- At election time, vote for the environment!

Here's to a plentiful, pesticide-free, growing season!

Sincerely,
Tovah Paglaro, Queen of Green

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