

Weeds take over in Sudbury after pesticide ban

Four years after cosmetic pesticide ban started, some say weeds are winning

By Megan Thomas [CBC News](#)

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It's been four years since Ontario brought in a ban on cosmetic pesticide use, and some in Sudbury say a growing number of lawns are being replaced because weeds have taken over.

Denis Charbonneau is the manager of Valley Nursery Sod in Chelmsford.

He estimated the demand for turf is up about 20 per cent since the ban went into effect — something he attributes to the number of people tearing out and replacing old lawns overtaken by weeds.

"I believe the main drive is the ban they put on pesticides and herbicides and the homeowners are now struggling to keep anything going," he said.

As a commercial producer, Charbonneau is exempt from the provincial ban.

But he has also changed what he plants, with an eye to battling weeds once the turf is relocated to someone's yard.

"We've modified the varieties we are using, so they are a bit more resistant to weeds and they crowd out weeds better," he said.

A ban on the use of cosmetic pesticides in Ontario started in 2009 to reduce the risk of health affects for people and pets.

Lawn be gone

Since the ban started, it's also becoming more popular to give up the fight with weeds altogether.



Eris Abdullah from Planet Earth Organic Landscaping and Gardening says more people are opting to reduce or eliminate lawns in their yard. (Megan Thomas/CBC)

Landscaper Ersin Abdullah has a company called Planet Earth Organic Landscaping and Gardening, which specializes in incorporating alternatives to lawn into yards.

Reducing the size of lawn in favour of trees, shrubs and gardens has become a growing trend over the past few years, he said.

"People are really having a hard time and they are looking for alternatives," he said.

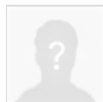
Abdullah noted some people are even going further and replacing areas that would traditionally be lawn — such as front yards — with vegetable gardens.

"What I recommend — so their neighbours aren't shocked — is [incorporating] edibles with perennials and annuals, so you have a nice mix."

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