

- [VANCOUVER SUN STAFF BLOGS](#)
- [VANCOUVER SUN COMMUNITY BLOGS](#)

[/STAFF/Life/Food/The Green Man](#) [The Green Man RSS Feed](#)

[Vancouver park board adopts pesticide ban to help save honeybees](#)

October 30, 2014. 7:30 am • Section: [The Green Man](#)



Vancouver park board institutes pesticide ban to help save honeybees Health Canada blamed the use of neonics for a spate of bee deaths in 2012 and in 2013.

The skinny

Vancouver's park board will no longer plant or purchase plants treated with a class of pesticides implicated in honeybee die-offs after passing a motion banning "neonics" on Monday night. While the park board does not use neonics in its own nursery operations, it does purchase about \$175,000 worth of plants each year from third parties that may be using these pesticides.

What are neonics?

Neonicotinoids — widely known as neonics — are a class of pesticide used to protect nursery plants from damage by sap-sucking and leaf-chewing insects. Their main use is in the food system, where they are used to treat corn and soybean seed for large-scale agriculture. Health Canada blamed the use of neonics for a spate of bee deaths in 2012 and in 2013. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency concluded that "current agricultural practices related to the use of neonicotinoid treated corn and soybean seed are not sustainable."

What happened?

The neonic ban is part of the rollout of the park board's Pollinator Project, which facilitates the creation of landscapes and gardens in the park system that are friendly to honeybees, butterflies and other pollinating insects. "The park board has a limited jurisdiction, but one thing that we can do is help set industry standards, because we are such a big purchaser and we cover so much green space," said commissioner Niki Sharma, who introduced the motion. "So we will not be buying from suppliers that cannot demonstrate that their products are neonic-free, and we won't be using any in our system."

Why do we care?

The new policy does not prevent nurseries from selling seeds or plants treated with neonics to their retail customers in Vancouver. A study released earlier this year by Friends of the Earth Canada found that half of the "bee-friendly" plants purchased in B.C. nurseries — including lavender and salvia — tested positive for neonics. Many of the samples contained neonics in levels that are not immediately lethal but that could be harmful to bees over time. Neonics are toxic to bumblebees and honeybees in chronic low-level exposure at levels as low as 0.1 to 10 parts per billion, according to recent studies.

What can I do?

Some samples from nurseries in B.C., Ontario and Quebec revealed levels of neonics well within the deadly range for pollinators at 15 to 52 parts per billion. Plants such as salvia and alyssum are often used in large numbers to fill flower beds or long edging, which increases the exposure to insects. To avoid neonics, purchase organic bedding plants and seeds, or ask nursery staff if plants have been treated before you buy.

My new cookbook [Grow What You Eat, Eat What You Grow](#) is now available in bookstores and online at [Chapters.ca](#)

[Health Canada considers approving new pesticide related to neonics](#)Next [The Green Man post](#) [Science says the real superfoods are unsexy and inexpensive. Sorry](#)[Previous The Green Man post](#)

We encourage all readers to share their views on our articles and blog posts. We are committed to maintaining a lively but civil forum for discussion, so we ask you to avoid personal attacks, and please keep your comments relevant and respectful. If you encounter a comment that is abusive, click the “X” in the upper right corner of the comment box to report spam or abuse. We are using Facebook commenting. [Visit our FAQ page for more information.](#)



Add a comment...

Also post on Facebook

Posting as Norah G Fon ([Change](#))

Comment



Norah G Fon

NORAHG RESPONDS AGAINST VANCOUVER PARK BOARD — PROHIBITION SELF-IMPOSED ON THE BASIS OF THE AMATEURISH & DISCREDITED ASSESSMENT BY FRIENDS OF THE EARTH (FOE).

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is WRONG! On October 28th, 2014, Park Board Commissioners self-imposed reckless and arbitrary prohibition against neonicotinoid insecticides on the basis of an OUTRAGEOUSLY FALSE assessment from a notorious anti-pesticide organization, Friends of the Earth. On June 25th, 2014, Friends of the Earth falsely alleged that so-called « bee-killing pesticides » were found in garden center plants produced by the nursery industry. This assessment by FOE was OUTRAGEOUSLY FALSE! The FOE assessment (a.k.a. Gardeners Beware) has been discredited since its tests did not conform to internationally-accredited practices, and there was no legal chain of custody for the plant samples tested. Experts have quickly criticized and condemned the amateurish and unscientific assessment by FOE, which was not performed under Good Laboratory Practice. World-wide, the expert and scientific assessments of all pest control products must be conducted under those guidelines which adhere to principles of the internationally-accredited Good Laboratory Practice (GLP). FOE is relying upon an assessment that is not subject to stringent GLP requirements or statutory sanction. Consequently, the FOE assessment is discredited! Additionally, experts have quickly criticized and condemned the amateurish and unscientific assessment by FOE, since there was no legal chain of custody for the plant samples tested. The samples themselves were collected by mere gardening housewives. And the samples were then handled by FOE-activists, who have a clear political agenda against neonicotinoid insecticides. It is extremely likely that FOE-activists tampered with the samples by deliberately contaminating them with insecticide. The tampering was performed with the malicious intent of coercing and intimidating government officials into prohibiting neonicotinoid insecticides. Consequently, the FOE assessment is again discredited! The FOE assessment has been further discredited since its finding could not be published in any peer-reviewed and legitimate scientific journal. The FOE assessment is merely an amateurish attempt to perform pesticide research. It is clear that the amateurish and unscientific FOE assessment was performed with a political agenda to conspire to impose prohibition against neonicotinoid insecticides used in the urban landscape, the nursery industry, and the agriculture industry. Moreover, the mere ability to measure or detect the presence of an insecticide ingredient in a plant is not an indication that it poses any risk to bees, especially in parts per million. Neonicotinoid insecticides will cause no harm to bees since their exposure is at very low levels, far too low to cause harmful effects. Even at these low levels, the active ingredient is short-lived. Additionally, neonicotinoid insecticides will cause no harm to bees since the active ingredients work their way systemically to the inside of the plant. The plant tissues contain only tiny amounts of ingredient that are unavailable to bees since they are not feeding on the plants. It is a myth to believe that plants treated with neonicotinoid insecticides will somehow cause harm to bees. It is clear that FOE has a clear political agenda to conspire to impose prohibition against neonicotinoid insecticides. FOE is operated by truth-challenged non-expert anti-pesticide lobbyists who are paid-for-profit to subversively concoct imaginary dangers about pest control products. The amateurish and unscientific FOE assessment does not provide any credible information to EPA and Health Canada to justify its subversive anti-pesticide conspiracy campaign. FOE also ridiculously implies that its amateurish and unscientific assessment is somehow being withheld from Health Canada, EPA, and every other regulatory agency in the world. Health Canada and EPA, and not FOE, have the essential expertise and credibility concerning pest control products. Friends of the Earth's assessment has been discredited, and this organization clearly has no expertise regarding pest control products. When used properly, neonicotinoid insecticides cause no harm, and do not hurt bees. If we had less conventional neonicotinoid use in the environment, we would still have bee colony collapse disorder, because many bee-keepers are NOT competent to manage their hives. Prohibition will not save bees. <http://tinyurl.com/pxqzh6m> For the whole truth regarding BEES, go to ... <http://wp.me/p1jq40-6WJ> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-2BA> <http://wp.me/p1jq40-6H8> <http://wp.me/p1jq40-7ty> NORAHG is the National Organization Responding Against HUIJE that seek to destroy the Green space and other industries. WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G Get the latest details at <http://pesticidetruths.com/> <http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-2rr> <https://www.facebook.com/norah.gfon>.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [Unfollow Post](#) · 2 seconds ago



Robert Wager · Top commenter · University of British Columbia

It is a real shame public policy is once again being driven by fear not facts. Neonics have very little if anything to do with Bees in Western Canada. But that is just the facts, far easier to push fear based policy. Pity

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [Follow Post](#) · 4 hours ago

Facebook social plugin