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Pesticide Ban - Trends

Beware—your municipality may have anti-pesticide Nazis operating soon; and some positive trends wherein pesticide bans have been modified, toned down or withdrawn altogether!

by Art Drysdale

by Art Drysdale

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Art Drysdale, a life-long resident of Toronto and a horticulturist well known all across Canada, is now a resident of Parksville, British Columbia on Vancouver Island, just north of Nanaimo. He has renovated an old home and has a new garden there. His radio gardening vignettes are heard in south-western Ontario over two radio stations: Easy 101 FM out of Tillsonburg at 2 PM weekdays and CD98.9 FM out of Norfolk County at 11:40 AM weekdays.

Art also has his own website at <http://www.artdrysdale.com>



July 15, 2012

All Gardening



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Richmond, British Columbia with a population of almost 190,000 is generally recognized as that part of 'Metro Vancouver' that contains the airport and the 2010 Olympic Oval facility. It may soon be better known for a negative than those two positives!

Richmond by-law officers (a.k.a. anti-pesticide Nazis) are on the lookout for lawn law-breakers and guerilla gardeners using illegal pesticides to spruce up their gardens and grass. Weekend yard patrols are scheduled throughout the summer, according to a report presented to a Richmond City Council Committee on July 3rd, 2012.

The target?

Home-owners and landscapers spraying their lawn with products like Killex or Weed 'N' Feed—products banned under Richmond's needless, senseless and malicious prohibition against pest control products used in the urban landscape.

According to the report, eagle-eyed by-law officers conducted a blitzkrieg on the streets on Saturday, May 26th, 2012, and handed out "compliance instructions" to 27 residents and six landscaping firms, and fines were issued. The fines are \$100 dollars for the first offence, \$500 dollars for the second, and \$1,000 dollars for the third.

Richmond's anti-pesticide prohibition applies to residential and city property, but excludes industries like farms, golf courses, and indoor extermination that use the very same ingredients as professional lawn care companies, as well as individual homeowners.

Although the use of pest control products is banned for so-called cosmetic reasons in Richmond, local retailers are still permitted to sell the chemicals.

Nonetheless, on May 17th, 2012, British Columbia's Special Committee on Cosmetic Pesticides stopped the trend towards needless, senseless and malicious prohibition. The Special Committee announced that it would not recommend prohibition against pest control products used in the urban landscape. [See my item here dated May 20, 2012.]

Furthermore, a recent poll conducted by Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association

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Above, the *Allium giganteum* are just about to finish in our garden; *Corydalis flexuosa* 'Purple Leaf' continues to bloom now as it has for the past six or more weeks; though I've grown many *Gum* previously, this one (*G. chilense* 'Red Dragon') is new to me; my newly acquired *Acer palmatum* 'Ukigumo' is a prized possession; and pasque flowers (*Anemone pulsatilla*) even look attractive when going to seed. Below, a single, orange sunrose (*Helianthemum nummularium*); followed by a double red cultivar; and then a closely-related semi-shrub rockrose (*Cistus x hybridus* 'Mickie'); a Cape fuchsia (*Oenothera 'Glowing Magenta'*); and a thin, young visitor to our pond, helping to catch insects! Author photos.



(CCSPA) con-firmed that the vast majority of residents in British Columbia are opposed to the prohibition of conventional pest control products, and they actually favor the continued use of these products around their homes and in public green spaces.

Pesticide bans result in catastrophic carnage caused by business failures, garbage dump green spaces, stunningly exorbitant costs, horrific fines, and even illness and death.

Pesticide bans have inflicted carnage in jurisdictions such as Halifax Regional Municipality, and the Provinces of Québec and Ontario. Because of pesticide bans, the owners, employees, and families dependent on professional lawn care businesses have faced terror, despair and destitution.

Due to a pesticide ban in Halifax Regional Municipality, professional lawn care customers disintegrated by over 50 per cent. In British Columbia, as a direct result of municipal pesticide bans, professional lawn care companies have lost over 40 per cent of their customers. As a sad consequence of a pesticide ban in the province of Québec, over 60 per cent of the professional lawn care businesses were annihilated. Because of a pesticide ban in Ontario, the professional lawn care industry lost over \$500,000,000, with up to 12,500 unemployed. In Ontario, one company per week disappears into total oblivion.

Having mentioned above that "British Columbia's Special Committee on Cosmetic Pesticides stopped the trend towards needless, senseless and malicious prohibition" I thought it would be interesting to take a look at some of the other reversals of and alterations to prohibitions that have taken place in the past few years, both in Canada and the U.S.

For example, (looking at the list alphabetically) in Ashland, Oregon, on March 2nd, prohibition of pesticides was rescinded; and in our own province of Alberta, prohibition was stopped on August 9th, 2011. In Beaumont, Alberta, prohibition was stopped on October 27th, 2011, and in the larger city of Calgary, prohibition was stopped between 2009 and 2011. As of July 5th 2012, the city of Campbell River, B.C. was still hesitant about enacting prohibition. In the great city of Chicago, prohibition was rescinded as of August 19th, 2011; while in Edmonton, Alberta, prohibition was stopped as of February 6th, this year.

Everett, Washington was where pesticide-free ended and weed spraying resumed on June 6th this year. And, under the heading of Golf, in San Francisco, a significant development occurred with regard to the operation of Sharp Park Golf Course in December 2011. The anti-golf fanatics had gotten a resolution through San Francisco Council to close the course, but Mayor Ed Lee vetoed the idea. A strong victory against fanatical anti-everything Nazis!

In the British Columbia cities of Kamloops and Kelowna, the professional lawn care industry was granted ex-emption status on the use of the chemicals between 2010 and 2012. In Kamloops the prohibition was stopped while in Merritt prohibition was also stopped, on May 14th, 2010.

In Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, the rural municipality has stated its opposition to an upcoming provincial ban as of June 13th this year.

In the province of Québec, the first province to pass a total ban on the so-called cosmetic pesticides, there has been some positive news. As of February 2010 there are some permitted active ingredients, and more important, on May 26th, 2011, Dow Chemical Company prevailed over the Province and defeated the provincial ban. This year, and going back a decade, the city of Regina Saskatchewan has stopped prohibition of chemical use, primarily through the efforts of the Mayor.

Going back to B.C., the cities of Revelstoke (on June 22nd, 2010) and Rossland (on December 15th that year) have both delayed the introduction of prohibition legislation, but the city of Revelstoke stresses that it has only been delayed! In Salmon Arm, B.C. on March 8th last year, the prohibition was rescinded and lawn care companies were granted an exemption.

This year on April 19th in Scarborough, Maine, the town rescinded their legislation. In Steinbach, Manitoba, on April 19th, considerable opposition to prohibition was expressed.

In the United Kingdom, back on December 15th, 2010, the pre-notification process was eliminated making spraying easier.

Vernon, B.C. stopped prohibition of the chemicals in January, 2010.

One other happening with regard to the easing of prohibition rulings involves "SafeLawns" advocate Paul Tukey, in the U.S.A. To say Tukey is controversial is putting it mildly. He has been formally charged with using certain products without a licence (in his home state), and often travels to Canada to give talks; taking home his high fee in cash, thus not paying any tax on the money to Canadian authorities. In December 2010 he was banned from coming to speak at Canada Blooms in Toronto where he would have been promoting the prohibition of 'cosmetic chemicals'.

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