

Portland Parks And Rec Continues To Use Roundup After Recent Cancer Controversy

By Anamika Vaughan | Published September 20 Updated September 20

Last August, [a California jury](#) found Monsanto liable for their popular glyphosate-based herbicide 'Roundup' causing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in school groundskeeper Dewayne Johnson. The company was fined \$289 million in damages and fines.

Now, even after this court decision, Portland Parks and Recreation is still using Monsanto's weed killers in Portland's parks. As recently as Sept. 15, a Portland Twitter user tweeted out a sign in Washington Park warning of the use of Roundup Pro to manage vegetation.

The parks bureau confirms it's still using Roundup.

"The [integrated pest management] approach is used by parks systems around the country and is considered the modern, science-based standard for progressive and sustainable park stewardship," said Mark Ross, a spokesman for Portland Parks & Recreation. "Through its holistic blend of cultural, mechanical, biological and judicious chemical methods, IPM programs treat herbicide as a last resort. This ensures we can address potential health and environmental impacts of any of our practices."

"While we can tolerate weeds in our parks, there is a need to target certain areas such as tree circles, shrub beds, and some park infrastructure to protect tree root flares, plantings, and maintain park amenities," Ross continues. "This is done through the sensible use of carefully screened herbicides on certain targets—and never on grassy areas of parks."

No comment was made on the use of potentially cancer-causing chemicals in Portland's public parks, though Ross did describe IPM approach as a "modern, science-based standard for progressive and sustainable park stewardship."

Monsanto plans to fight the California verdict, claiming that the "decision does not change the fact that more than 800 scientific studies and reviews...support the fact that glyphosate does not cause cancer, and did not cause Mr. Johnson's cancer."

The answer to those questions is not clear. Aside from Monsanto's insistence that the substance is completely safe and does not cause cancer, the scientific community is not so certain.

In 2015, France-based International Agency for Research on Cancer, an agency of the World Health Organization, [released a report](#) finding glyphosate "probably carcinogenic to humans," meaning that "there is limited evidence of carcinogenicity in humans and sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in experimental animals."

But in 2016, the IARC was [heavily criticized](#) for misleading classifications, cherry-picking data and studies, as well as confusing and scaring the public about carcinogens.

In 2016, the world health organization put out [another report](#) together with the United Nations that found "there is some evidence of a positive association between glyphosate exposure and risk of NHL...however, it is notable that the only large cohort study of high quality found no evidence of an association at any exposure level." The report further concluded that "glyphosate is unlikely to pose a carcinogenic risk to humans from exposure through the diet."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [put out a report in 2016](#) with their own evaluations of the safety of glyphosate, concluding that "the available data at this time do not support a carcinogenic process for glyphosate." But the EPA has been criticized for [working too closely](#)

[with Monsanto.](#)