

## Environment

# Pesticides are a bane on the environment

By JIM HOLLINGWORTH

For the past 40 years, our gardens and agricultural lands have been subjected to an assault by the application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides). These poisons contaminate the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil that grows our food.

Chemical pesticides were first formulated during the second world war. They are derived from the same chemical agents that produce deadly chemical weapons. Over 600 such agents are applied to Canadian food, forests, homes, lawns, parks, and



lakes.

These agents have permeated all aspects of our environment. They have been found in the fat of Arctic polar bears, in the milk of nursing mothers, in the water and fish of remote lakes, and in

every human tested on Earth. No one has escaped this menace.

From 1950 to 1983, the global production of pesticides increased from 200,000 to 2.7 billion pounds annually. The World Health Organization has

established that over 20,000 deaths occur annually as a result of pesticide use.

The majority of these deaths occur in third-world countries, where pesticides that are banned in North America because of their toxicity are applied by unsuspecting farm workers. However, such banned pesticides are often used on crops, which are subsequently imported back to us, thus completing "the circle of poison."

It is quite likely that many deaths in North America result from pesticide use.

How can we reduce our exposure to and our intake of pesticides?

Research shows that the urban use of pesticides on private and public gardens and parks is 15 to 25 times greater than on agricultural land. Public concern and pressure has persuaded some municipalities and school boards to stop the use of pesticides on parkland, schoolyards, and roadsides.

Some lawn-care and insect-control companies are now posting warning signs following the application of pesticides.

Individually, we can limit the spread of these pesticidal poisons, by refusing to use them on our own properties. Do we have to aim for that pure monoculture of perfect green grass that is so highly promoted

by the chemical lawn-care specialists? Will our egos disintegrate if we are found out to have a few violets, clovers and dandelions on our front lawns?

Will we feel glad or sad when we find that the pesticides applied to our lawns have been inhaled by our family and neighbours; have contaminated our drinking water; and have entered into our food chain? These are important questions to be asked before pesticides are applied to our urban lawns.

There is an alternative, healthy way to maintain a lawn. Such a lawn may have a few more flowers, insects, and worms in it than the chemically-dependent lawn. Such a natural lawn will be healthier for its owners, the birds, and rabbits that feed upon it, and for the whole planet.

In "How to get your lawn and garden off drugs," published by Friends of the Earth, Carole Rubin clearly illustrates the practical steps to create an organic lawn and garden. This excellent book is available for \$12.95 from Friends of the Earth, 701-251 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5J6.

Now, more lawn-care companies are switching to organic methodology. Should you require the services of a lawn-care company, select one that uses an organic, non-pesticide (or minimal pesticide) approach.

## Gardening

# A garden plan is important

A garden plan will assist in controlling expenses on your 1991 garden. It will also help ensure that the time and money invested in your home landscape is well spent. According to the Canadian Garden Council, a well-landscaped home can add anywhere from seven and 14 percent to the selling price of a home.

Most home owners think a professional landscape plan is out of reach for them. They envision such a plan requiring a visit by a landscape architect in order that the owners' needs, problem areas, and desires and dislikes be thoroughly discussed. True, it is most important that the family's present and future needs be considered, and that building in flexibility and staging in the garden plan will take time. However, there is no reason the homeowner cannot perform many of the preparatory steps, thus saving valuable professional time.

To this end, the Canadian Garden Council has a Garden Planning Kit that will be available to homeowners from participating garden centres at no cost. The kit is basically a three part package consisting of:

an introductory section with instructions on how to draw a simple rendering of your garden, using recognized symbols; a detailed questionnaire designed to have the homeowner make basic decisions as to what kind of garden is desired and what features needed; and grid paper on which to draw the garden, as it relates to the house with space to include at least one photo of the garden as it exists.

With the questions answered, the homeowner then takes the kit back to the garden centre where it was obtained, or if obtained from the Council, to a local landscape/garden centre. A garden plan can then be developed in a short period of time, and at very little cost. In most cases, the garden centre offering the service will provide the planning at no cost if a certain low expenditure level on the plants is achieved.

The Garden Planning Kit will be available in garden centres in most parts of Canada in late March to mid April. If you are hoping to make major landscape changes or alterations to your lot this year, now is the time you should be giving thought to some of the key questions in the kit.

Some of the most important questions to be asked of oneself have to do with the functions and role the garden is expected to fulfill. Examples of considerations are: do you have a swimming pool now, or will you want to install one in the future; do you have, or anticipate having children, and thus do you want an area for play equipment now or in the future; would you like to raise some of your own vegetables, and if so, just how intensive an interest is this; where would you like to have a patio or deck, or both, and how is it to be shaded; and do you require a storage area on your lot for a boat or trailer, that would need to be camouflaged with plants?

Most important in deliberations on just what kind of garden is desired, are the gardener(s)' thoughts on what type of plants are preferred. For example, evergreens (pines, spruce, junipers) provide year 'round color and interest vs. deciduous trees and shrubs (maples, poplars, lilacs) which have a major presence really only during the spring, summer and fall. Obtaining nursery catalogues now and browsing through them is a good way of making up your own mind as to your likes and dislikes.

26 Guelph St.  
Georgetown, Ont.  
877-9896  
Division of Mallon  
Floor Fashions Ltd.

**INCREDIBLE SAVINGS**  
ON BRAND NAME  
FURNISHINGS AT  
WHOLESALE  
PRICES!  
\*\*\*  
**Ontario Chesterfield  
Wholesalers**  
Behind Guelph Auto Mall, Guelph  
120-126 Malcolm Rd.  
Free Delivery & Layaway (519) 763-4477

**WE'RE YOUR INSURANCE  
BROKERS  
WE UNDERSTAND!**

**PAUL C. ARMSTRONG**  
INSURANCE BROKERS LTD.  
143 MILL ST.  
Halton Hills (Georgetown) Ontario  
877-0133

**H&R Block**  
stands  
behind its  
work.

We guarantee your satisfaction. And our experience in preparing complete and accurate tax returns will give you peace of mind.

**H&R BLOCK®**  
Canada's Tax Team.  
Put us to work for you!

Under New Ownership In A New Location

**7 JAMES STREET** **873-7855**  
(Off Main St.) Downtown Georgetown

73  
MAIN ST. S.  
DOWNTOWN  
GEORGETOWN

877-4313

John  
**Boughton**  
EST. 1958  
Jewellers

Learn to Drive...  
and Survive

with  
**Young Drivers of  
Canada**

**NEXT 4 WEEK COURSE**  
STARTS  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10th**  
6:30-9:38 p.m.

**877-0751**  
16 MOUNTAINVIEW RD. S., SUITE 302  
GEORGETOWN

350,000 GRADUATES RECOMMEND

**YOUNG DRIVERS  
OF CANADA**