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# Home, Lawn & Garden

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& Garden.

12 Pages

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## Be careful when using pesticides

Many Canadian gardeners inquire about the relative safety of various pesticides they use in their garden. For up-to-date information, the Canadian Garden Council sought data from the Crop Protection Institute of Canada, specifically the lawn and garden section of the Institute.

The Institute has a pamphlet entitled Q And A On Pesticides For Your Lawn And Garden. The pamphlet answers 16 commonly asked questions about lawn and garden pesticides. For example, one of the most common questions in gardeners' minds has to do with just what an "organic or natural pesticide" is and the difference between "organic" or "natural" products vs. the chemical pesticides. The pamphlet states: "'Organic' or 'natural' pesticides are terms commonly applied to organisms and chemicals found naturally in the environment. Although it may be perceived that these products are safer than those produced synthetically, this is not necessarily the case. Many synthetic chemicals are less toxic than those that occur naturally.

"Both synthetically produced and organic pesticides require the same extensive and stringent federal government evaluation and approval. For example, Nicotine sulphate, formerly used to control (garden) insects, is a highly toxic, naturally occurring product which is no longer registered for use as a pesticide."

Another frequently asked question about garden pesticides has to do with contact by children and/or pets. The pamphlet has the following to say about such exposures: "There is no such thing as zero risk. Every time you handle a pet, play a sport, cross the street or ride in the car, there is risk. By taking reasonable precautions and following directions, we can minimize unnecessary risk with pesticide use.

"Keep children and pets out of any area during pesticide application and until the area is dry, which may be up to 24 hours.

"In all cases, applicators should avoid skin contact with pesticides. Skin should be covered with protective clothing such as rubber gloves, long-sleeved shirts, long pants and boots."

Having received the answer about children and pets, gardeners often ask about the potential hazard from pesticides to birds, worms, bees and non-target plants. The pamphlet explains: "All pesticides must be biologically active to do their job properly, so they may affect non-target plants and animals. Careful observance of label instructions will minimize any hazards to other species."

—Canadian Garden Council

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