

HOME, LAWN & GARDEN

Check out your pool chemistry

Page 4



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Create a backyard oasis for nature

Page 6



8 Pages

Special pullout section



Grow a healthy, pesticide-free garden

A beautiful, lush, weed-free garden doesn't need chemicals such as pesticides.

The assumption that they are needed means many people reach for them when gardening. But the Canadian Cancer Society believes, based on a growing body of international scientific research, that pesticides sold to control weeds in lawns and gardens may cause cancer.

"Action should be taken to limit the risk to your health. This is especially true when the reason for using pesticides on lawns is to prevent weeds and plants that can be removed in other less damaging ways" says Rowena Pinto, director of prevention and public issues at the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division.

To reduce this risk, and help prevent cancer, avoid pesticides and use other ways to rid your lawn and garden of weeds. Here are some suggestions:

- Pick or dig out lawn and garden weeds at their root.
- Don't over-water your lawn. Two centimetres of water should be enough. Put a shallow container (such as an empty tuna fish can) on your grass to measure the depth of water.
- Never cut more than one-third of the height off your grass with your lawnmower. Cut grass shorter in the spring, then raise the mower blade as summer progresses, allowing the grass to develop strong roots.
- Use a spiked roller or shoes with spikes to aerate your lawn, allowing air, moisture and nutrients to get further down into the soil to reach the roots of the grass.
- De-thatch your lawn, if necessary, by vigorously raking and removing dead grass and weeds.

The Canadian Cancer Society's website, at www.cancer.ca, has more information on the uses and affects of pesticides. As well, questions can be answered by information specialists at the Society's Cancer Information Service at 1 888 939-3333.

—News Canada

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