

Neighbor-to-Neighbor: I'm concerned about pesticides

Weedkillers, bug spray, rat poison... all of these chemicals are known as **pesticides**. Pesticides are poisons designed to kill pests, but they can have many unintended consequences for nature, and for our neighbors. **There are five reasons that I'm concerned about pesticides in our neighborhood:**

1. Water



What we spray & spread on our lawns and gardens runs straight to our water. Standard water treatment isn't enough to remove many pesticides from our drinking water. Pesticides are found in every urban river & stream, and can kill fish or prevent them from reproducing.

2. Pets

Pets can't read danger signs that say "stay off the lawn." Exposure to pesticides can cause poisoning, tumors and kidney problems in cats and dogs.



3. Kids

Children are at greater risk than adults from exposure to pesticides. Children whose parents use lawn and garden pesticides are more likely to develop childhood cancer, including leukemia and non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Pesticide exposure can also harm a child's developing brain and affect asthma.

4. Birds

Lawn, garden and farm pesticides are extremely hazardous to birds and other wildlife. The American Bird Conservancy estimates that tens of millions of birds are killed in the US by pesticide poisoning each year. Birds are important predators who eat insects and rodents, and make our backyards beautiful!






5. Good bugs

Honeybees are disappearing around the world, and pesticides may be to blame. We need bees, dragonflies, ladybugs, butterflies and other "good bugs" to keep the "bad bugs" in our yards under control. Using pesticides kills off the good bugs and can let the "bad bug" populations get out of control.

Luckily, there are plenty of **easy pest solutions** that make it simple to cut back on our use of pesticides.

Check out the other side of this sheet for some tips!

Solutions: Making your yard a little greener

<p>Lawn care</p> 	<p>Lowest risk Some risk High risk</p>	<p>IPM: “Integrated Pest Management.” Build healthy soil, mow high and frequently, use natural fertilizers sparingly, tolerate occasional weeds. Spot treat weeds with a chemical if problems emerge. Broadcast sprays, pre-emergent herbicide treatments.</p>
<p>Mosquitoes</p> 	<p>Lowest risk Some risk High risk</p>	<p>Remove standing water; encourage natural predators like bats, dragonflies and birds. Use fans to keep mosquitoes away from porches and patios when outdoors. Use insect repellent when outdoors. Treat standing water with mosquito dunks to kill larvae. Area-wide mosquito misting systems.</p>
<p>Household pests</p> 	<p>Lowest risk Some risk High risk</p>	<p>Prevent pest problems by sealing cracks, fixing leaks, fixing window screens and using good sanitation. If a pest problem occurs, spot treat for specific pests (like ants, roaches, mice) with baits and traps. “Preventive” pesticide spraying on a calendar basis; indoor or outdoor perimeter treatments.</p>

Questions

to ask when a weed or pest problem occurs:

1. What is causing this pest problem?
2. Is this a big or a small problem? Can I live with it or not?
(Examples: A patch of clover – yes. Mice in the kitchen – probably not).
3. If we remove the cause of the problem, does it go away?



YES:
All right, we're done!



NO: We've removed the cause, but we still have the pest problem. What is the **least-toxic** product we can use? How can we apply it in the **most targeted** way?

Learn more about safer pest control and alternatives to toxic pesticides in your home and garden. Check out www.toxicfreenc.org

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