

What We Can Do To Reduce Waste

The news is SO DEPRESSING!

“A National Cancer Institute study says children are six times more likely to get childhood leukemia when pesticides are used in the home and garden.” (Toronto Star, April 24, 2001)

“Children whose mothers were exposed pre-natally to pesticides were more than twice as likely to have non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.” (Cancer, December 2000)

“Ninety five percent of the pesticides used on residential lawns are considered to be possible or probable carcinogens.” (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

“Strawberry production is destroying the stratospheric ozone layer. The soil fumigant methyl bromide, widely used by strawberry growers, more efficiently destroys the ozone layer than the notorious chlorofluorocarbons.” (Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides / NCAP, Journal of Pesticide Reform, Winter 1995)

“Using a pesticide can be compared to taking a prescription drug, in that the benefits must be weighed against the side effects. Pesticides alleviate symptoms, but do not provide a cure: they have not eliminated one insect species from the planet. In fact, extensive use of pesticides in agriculture has led to the development of genetically resistant insect and weed species that are no longer affected by some commonly used pesticides.” (Environment Canada, “Alternatives to Pesticides” fact sheet)

“Although banned over 20 years ago, organochlorines [like DDT] still heavily contaminate soils: food crops grown on them today possess significant levels of toxins.” ... “Because organochlorines do not biodegrade, they enter watercourses and drift across upper levels of the atmosphere, raining down upon every corner of the earth. They accumulate in the environment and can be found in the brains and fatty tissues of all Canadians.” (Dr. Michael R. Lyon, “Pesticides: More Dangerous than Pests!” in *alive* magazine, May 2001)

“Toxicity testing does not exist in the public record for nearly 75% of the top-volume chemicals in commercial use. In other words, we introduce chemicals into the environment without knowing if they are dangerous.” (M. Sara Rosenthal, *Stopping Cancer At The Source*)

“Many pesticide components are classified as ‘inert’, which allows them to be kept hidden from the public and not listed on product labels. These are more than just fillers or solvents. ‘Inert’ does not mean ‘inactive’ – some, such as benzene and xylene, are more toxic than listed chemicals.” (New York State Attorney’s Office, “The Secret Hazards of Lawn Pesticides: Inert Ingredients”, 1994)

We’re overwhelmed by the size and seriousness of the problem.

“Something has got to be done,” we say.

“But what can one person do,” we ask?

WHAT WE CAN DO TO REDUCE PESTICIDE USE

Nurture the desire to save our environment by helping to reverse damage that has already been done, and by working to stop further damage being done.

Inform ourselves about the dangers posed by the chemicals we use in our homes and on our properties, and monitor which pesticide products are being de-registered by our Pest Management Regulatory Agency.

Stop using products that include chemical components, which are dangerous to human and animal health.

Dispose of de-registered (i.e., banned) pesticide products (and those that are implicated in health studies) by packaging them carefully then delivering them to our community’s Hazardous Waste Depot.

Request that de-registered pesticides be removed from garden center and hardware store shelves, and that they be replaced by organic, non-toxic alternatives.

Use non-toxic alternatives to the insecticides, herbicides and fungicides we had previously considered safe and necessary.

Join an environment action group: we can do a great deal individually, but we can accomplish more if we act collectively.

Lobby our governments to develop better chemical screening and testing procedures.

Teach our children how important our environment is and that it needs our protection. (Showing by example is our most effective teaching tool.)

Create a Pesticide Free Zone, starting with our own homes and properties.

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