

Preventing Problems with Weeds and Insects

The best way to eliminate your need for pesticides is to keep your lawn healthy in the first place.

There are a variety of ways to do this:

- **Topdress** your lawn once or twice a year with 5 mm (1/4 inch) of compost, topsoil, or compost manure
- **Overseed** any bare spots in spring and fall with hardy grass seed
- **Mow High**- don't cut grass any shorter than 90 mm (3½ inches) in order to let the grass blades shade weeds and increase lawn thickness
- **Water Less**- only 25 mm (1 inch) per week is needed to keep your lawn green throughout the summer. Water in the morning to allow the most moisture to be absorbed

• **Replace** some of your grass with trees, shrubs, perennials, ground cover, and wild flowers. Native plants and flowers are good choices because they are adapted to grow well in our climate and soils without excessive water and fertilizer

• **Aerate** compacted soil in spring or fall to improve soil quality

• **Monitor** your yard to catch any problems early when they can be addressed without toxic chemicals

• **Choose** plants and grasses that are well-adapted for your soil, temperature range, and sun or shade exposure. Plants and grasses that are native to this area do better without too much assistance

Windsor's Pesticide By-Law

If you have a severe infestation and believe that you have no alternative to using pesticides, you need to ensure that you comply with Windsor's pesticide by-law.

In 2006, Windsor passed a by-law dealing with pesticides used for cosmetic purposes. From 2006 to 2008 certain limitations are placed on the use of pesticides to allow residents an opportunity to find alternatives to using pesticides. In 2009, a ban on the use of cosmetic pesticides comes into effect.

For more information call the City of Windsor at 311, or 519-255-2489 if you are calling from outside the city. The full text of the by-law is available at www.citywindsor.ca.

If you live in another municipality, please call your municipal offices to find out about regulation of pesticides in your area.

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Links

- <http://www.detroitriver.ca/gonatural>
- <http://www.healthylawns.net/>
- <http://www.organicgardentips.com/>
- <http://www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns/>

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Environment
Canada



Go Natural

Pull Don't Spray



“To home owners and residents of urban and rural areas we say dandelions are harmless and beautiful. They do not pose a threat to health; herbicides do, particularly to children.”



Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development report on pesticides. May 16, 2000

Why worry about pesticides?

Pesticides are poisons used to kill insects, weeds, disease organisms, and other unwanted living things. By their very nature, all pesticides are intended to kill some living organism. The long-term effects on human health from continuous exposure to low levels of chemical pesticides are a subject of ongoing debate. Children are especially vulnerable to chemicals because they are smaller and because of their rapid development. Veterinarians regularly cite pesticide exposure as the cause of death or ill health in dogs and cats, who are low to the ground and ingest chemicals on their paws when grooming themselves.



How do pesticides impact the Detroit River?

Scientists have shown that stormwater runoff from urban areas is a leading pollutant of rivers and lakes. A study in one Michigan watershed found that 75% of pollutant loadings to the river were due to home-site activities, including urban pesticide use. Even homeowners who don't live very close to the river can impact water quality and wildlife through their pesticide use. When pesticides and fertilizers are applied to lawns, between 60 and 90% of chemical sprays are washed into sewers, drains, or rivers where they can negatively impact wildlife. Granular products also easily wash off into sewers or water bodies, especially if they are not applied carefully, and can be readily ingested by wildlife or pets.



Research by the Canadian Wildlife Service has linked reproductive problems in birds with some commonly-used pesticides, and has found that large bird die-offs can occur even when pesticides are applied responsibly and properly.

Disposing of Pesticides

Unused pesticides or empty pesticide containers should be brought to the Household Chemical Waste Depot for proper disposal.

Leftover pesticides should never be dumped down the drain, down toilets, onto the ground, or into sewers.

The Depot is located at 3560 North Service Road in Windsor, near the intersection of E.C. Row Expressway and Central Avenue.

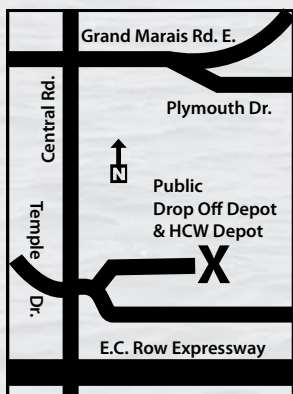
Without pesticides, what do I do about weeds and insects?

In order to ensure a clean and healthy future for everyone, we are all going to have to get used to a few weeds and insects. It may help to remember that the definition of a plant as a weed is all in the perception - a weed is simply a plant growing where it's not wanted. Consider as well that less than 2% percent of insects are harmful to humans or crops. Beneficial insects such as ground beetles, ladybugs, fireflies, green lacewings, praying mantids, spiders, and wasps keep harmful insects from devouring your plants. They also pollinate plants and decompose organic matter.



OK...but there are still some plants that I don't want in my yard.

If you only have isolated weeds such as dandelions, consider using a hand-held weed puller to remove them. The best way to prevent problems is to ensure your lawn is healthy (which will discourage pests), and to head off any problems early.



The Depot is open Monday to Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

(Reduced hours from December to February)

