

THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS, DOGS & LAWN CHEMICALS



**COMMUNITY ACTION TOOLKIT
TO ACCOMPANY THE VIDEO**

INTRODUCTION

Dear Fellow Pet-Lovers,

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the dangers of lawn care chemicals. Increasingly, we are learning about the surprising dangers of chemicals in products we use every day, from plastic baby bottles to non-stick pans. We rarely realize that a green lawn, something so intrinsic to the American Dream, might also be toxic to us and our pets. It's time to consider safety hazards while pursuing the green, healthy, American lawn.

More and more people are beginning to recognize the dangers of chemical or pesticide exposure, and can voice their concerns and work to avoid it. Our dogs, cats, rabbits, turtles, hamsters, chickens, and other pets don't have that voice, so, it is our responsibility to advocate on their behalf.

The "Truth About Cats, Dogs and Lawn Chemicals" explains the very real threat of chemical contamination to your pets and offers ideas on how you can take action. This resource guide is meant to support your growing awareness of chemical exposure to pets. We encourage you to share this information with your neighbors and to help with educating your state legislators and local officials. Your actions do make a difference!

We want to thank Pesticide Action Network of North America, Toxics Action Center, Beyond Pesticides, the Newman's Own Foundation, and Documentary Educational Resources for their support—without them, this wouldn't be possible.

On behalf of our furry family members, Lily (Australian Shepherd), Bernie (English Setter), and Charlotte (Tuxedo cat), we encourage you to learn about these issues and take action.

Sincerely,



Paul Schramski
State Director
Pesticide Watch Education Fund



Sanford Lewis
Producer
The Truth About Cats, Dogs and Lawn Chemicals Video

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Contrary to what lawn "care" companies would like people to believe, herbicides (weed killers) and other pesticides are not "magic bullets". They are broad spectrum biocides, and by their very nature can harm organisms other than targeted species. This includes homeowners and their families, neighbors, pets, and all other forms of life. The pesticide industry downplays this by claiming their chemicals are heavily diluted, but doesn't mention the toxins are still extremely dangerous in small amounts.



THE HISTORY OF LAWN CHEMICALS

The modern pesticide industry began after World War II, and was spurred on again after the Vietnam War. Companies that produced chemical and biological weapons for the military needed a new market for their products when these wars ended. The chemical companies marketed their toxic pesticides to lawn care pesticide applicators, and applicators latched on to the growing postwar suburban boom.

By the 1970s, the American Dream had taken new shape: The white picket fence, 2 children, 2-car garage family, was now made complete by the perfect green lawn.

The result of this sophisticated and aggressive marketing effort by lawn care applicators and pesticide companies is an estimated 70 to 80 million pounds of pesticides annually sprayed on home lawns, trees, and shrubs¹ across the country.

While the amount of pesticides used in agriculture, industry, commercial and government sectors has decreased over the past twenty years, the use of residential lawn and garden pesticides is on the rise. Home use of pesticides has risen 42% between 1998 and 2001 and now represents the only growth sector of the U.S. pesticide market.²

Until the public rejects greater pesticide use, and replaces synthetic chemical use with biological controls, the trend of pesticide use will likely continue. So it will take some work to rethink the American Dream. "Pesticides are essential tools if we're going to manage the planet the way we're doing," says Carol DiSalvo, a biologist and integrated pest management (IPM) specialist with the National Park Service's Washington, DC, office. "But you can't call them safe. People need to understand the risks associated with pesticides before consenting to have them on their lawns."³

My dog Domino developed thyroid cancer and died at the age of 8 twelve years ago. A veterinary worker suggested that he may have been exposed to pesticides.

--Julie, New Jersey

¹ EPA/ Santa Cruz- 70 million, *E Magazine*, Bradley article, 80 million. In 1999, the last year such figures were available, 78 million pounds of yard insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides were sold to US households - not including professional applications, the EPA said.

² Pesticide Action Network of North America (PANNA). "Refuse to Use Lawn Chemicals" April 15, 2005 http://www.panna.org/legacy/panups/panup_20050415.dv.html

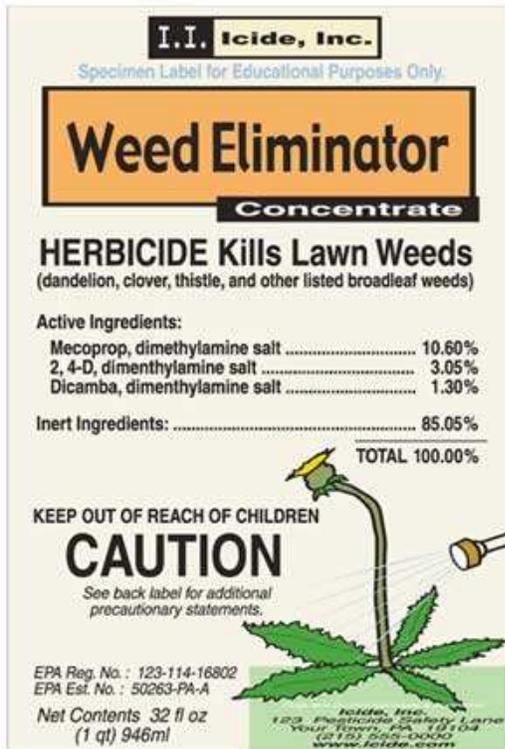
³ Joyce, Stephanie. "Why the Grass Isn't Always Greener," *Environmental Health Perspectives*, Vol 106, No 8, Aug 1998.



DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH

Exposure to pesticides is widespread. The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in a study of 9,282 people nationwide, found pesticides in 100% of the people who had both blood and urine tested. The average person carried 13 of 23 pesticides tested. Unfortunately, we do not have similar data for pets, but we know that lawn care pesticides pose threats to pets.

The first step in understanding the hazards of these products is always to **read the label**. Labels provide important information, but not all of the information you will need to help change the way you and your neighbors care for your lawns and gardens. This guide will help you find the rest of the information you will need!



Reading the Label:

1. **Poison or Danger, Warning and Caution**
2. **Active Ingredients**
3. **Target Pests**
4. **Hazards**
5. **Precautionary Statements**
6. **How to Use, Store and Dispose**

Source: Maine Board of Pesticides Control, 2008

Do your own research to find out what kinds of chemicals your lawn care products contain. The website www.pesticideinfo.org is a resource provided by Pesticide Action Network of North America, and provides a searchable database of hazard and regulatory information about specific products. Searching this website for product names or listed active ingredients is an easy way to discover whether the products you use are hazardous.



The “skull and crossbones” picture shows up on this website to indicate high toxicity in a given category, such as reproductive and developmental harm.



Common Groups of Lawn Pesticides and their Effects on Animal Health:

- ✓ **Organophosphates** Organophosphate compounds include some of the most toxic chemicals used in agriculture. Fat-soluble and easily transmitted throughout the body, this group of pesticides is defined by their inhibition of the enzyme cholinesterase.⁴ Examples of this class of chemicals are Chlorpyrifos and Diazinon. Poisoning symptoms in animals include excessive salivation, "wet" respiratory sounds (because of increased bronchial secretions), vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, slow heart rates and miosis (pinpoint pupils). In serious cases, respiratory failure and death can occur.
- ✓ **Carbamates** cause a reaction similar to organophosphates because they inhibit the same enzyme pathway. This group includes the commonly used insecticide carbaryl. Exposure causes convulsions, dizziness, labored breathing, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, unconsciousness, muscle cramps, and excessive salivation.⁵ Toxicity of these chemicals depends on the route of exposure.
- ✓ **Phenoxy and benzoic acid herbicides** like 2,4 D, MCPP, and MCPA affect the central nervous system. Poisoning symptoms include involuntary twitching, loss of sensation, vomiting, stomach pains, diarrhea, weakness, fatigue, dermatitis, and aching muscles. Dogs and cats that don't excrete acids as efficiently are especially sensitive to this chemical. An EPA-funded study found that 2,4-D is easily tracked indoors, exposing children and pets at levels ten times higher than pre-application levels.⁶ Another study showed that exposure to phenoxy-treated lawns and gardens appeared to dramatically increase the risk of bladder cancer in Scottish Terriers.⁷
- ✓ **Pyrethroids** are listed as possible carcinogens by the US EPA and affect the central and peripheral nervous systems. Commonly used chemicals like Permethrin and Resmethrin are in this group. Poisoning symptoms include muscle tremors, hyperexcitability, depression, ataxia, vomiting, seizures, anorexia, and death. Exposure to Resmethrin caused increased thyroid and liver weight in adult dogs, and exposure to these chemicals is linked to harm in neurological development.⁸

⁴ Michigan Department of Natural Resources. "Organophosphate Toxicity."

http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12150_12220-27249--,00.html

⁵ PAN Pesticides Database- Carbaryl http://pesticideinfo.org/Detail_Chemical.jsp?Rec_Id=PC32816

⁶ Environmental Health Perspectives 109:11, November 2001.

⁷ Glickman, J Am Vet Med Assoc 2004; 24:1290-1297.

⁸ U.S. EPA. Permethrin and Resmethrin TEACH Chemical Summary.

www.epa.gov/teach/chem_summ/pyrethroids_summary.pdf

- ✓ **Organochlorines** are a chemical class that includes well-known toxic and persistent compounds such as PCBs, PCE, and DDT. Acute pesticide poisoning symptoms include muscle tremors and twitches, respiratory problems, and seizures. Death is caused by respiratory failure during sustained seizures and/or high body temperature. Long-term exposure is linked to neurological damage, respiratory illness, and various types of cancers.⁹ The organochlorine Lindane is now restricted in the US, and is used primarily as a seedcoating agent and is an active ingredient in medicated shampoos to kill lice and scabies. However, other organochlorines are still widely in use. Endosulfan is highly toxic to the nervous system, and poses a significant risk to cats and dogs because of its acute toxicity.



⁹ A closer look at Organochlorine Pesticides.
http://www.akaction.org/fact_sheets/Organochlorine_Pesticide_Fact_Sheet.pdf.



HOSTING A SCREENING OF THE FILM

Most people don't know about the dangers of lawn care chemicals to their pets, so we need to share the truth with them. Use this film to bring people in your community together and help launch discussion and ideas for community action.

☐ **STEP 1: Pick a location, time and date for a showing.** Your home, your local dog club, your local theatre or wherever is a good place for people to gather. Consider holding it at a pet-friendly venue so that pet owners can attend with their pets.

☐ **STEP 2: Invite your neighbors, friends and co-workers.** Put flyers up in local doggie parks, pet stores, or vet offices. The more people we reach, the greater our impact.

☐ **STEP 3: Make it fun.** A good tip is to provide food and drink, or make it a potluck.

☐ **STEP 4: Take Action.** Use parts of this guide, including Refuse to Use ChemLawn pledges, doorhangers, fact sheets about commonly used pesticides, information about organic lawn care, or other action items so people leave feeling empowered.

☐ **STEP 5: Fundraise.** Pass a hat around for those interested in making a financial contribution to support wider distribution of this video. Feel free to use the enclosed envelopes.

My dog passed away in November 2007 from Lymphoma...6 months out of the year my dog was exposed to TruGreen ChemLawn's chemicals.

--Maureen from

Sample Agenda

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 7:00-7:15 | Get settled in, have people introduce themselves and say something about their pets, introduce film |
| 7:15-7:45 | Show Film; Any reactions/discussion? |
| 7:45-8:30 | Discuss How to Take Action In Your Community—Does this group of people want to get more involved by passing a pesticide-free park resolution? |
| 8:30-8:45 | Decide on Next Steps. Give People Materials to Take Home. If this group will meet again, get Contact Information! |



GET ACTIVE!

Unfortunately, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the state agencies charged with regulating the use of lawn care pesticides have not yet taken effective action. They allow many flaws in the approval process for pesticides. Even if a pesticide causes severe health and environmental impacts, including cancer and genetic damage, it may still be allowed for use. In fact, the EPA may determine a cancer-causing chemical may be used despite its public health hazard if its “economic, social or environmental” benefits are deemed by the US EPA to be greater than its risk. So, to protect our pets and families, we are left to take matters into our own hands.

The following suggestions will help you decide the best way to engage with these issues in your community.

Reduce Exposure- Use Safer Alternatives

You are in control of your own lawn. Choose to use only natural and organic products. Follow the four easy steps that are outlined in the film.

- Adjust the pH so that your soil is at peak pH for grass to grow (around 6.5).
- Use organic, slow-release fertilizer.
- Overseed to encourage more grass to grow. Spread seed especially in the spring and fall.
- Mow High (around 3 inches) to crowd out the weeds.

The website www.pesticideinfo.org not only provides information on the toxicity of lawn care products, it can also help you to find the best nontoxic, pet-friendly products.

Get Active! Spread the word about safer alternatives by putting “pesticide free” lawn signs in your lawn. Talk to your neighbors about their use of lawn care products.



Change the Way Business Is Done

The lack of local control over lawn care pesticide use, partnered with the weakness of federal testing, and the failure of state officials to enforce current law, suggests we need to partner with and challenge the way business is done—and make it organic.

REFUSE TO USE TRUGREEN CHEMLAWN

You may have seen TruGreen ChemLawn trucks passing through your neighborhood at some point. TruGreen ChemLawn is the leading provider of lawn care services in the United States, operating in 46 states with approximately 3.4 million residential and commercial customers. Their products are toxic to people and pets. A study conducted in 2005 by Toxics Action Center¹⁰ revealed, among other things:

- 53% of TruGreen ChemLawn's pesticide products include ingredients that are possible carcinogens, as defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.
- 41% of TruGreen ChemLawn's pesticide products include ingredients that are banned or restricted in other countries.
- All 32 of TruGreen ChemLawn's pesticide products include ingredients that pose threats to the environment, including: threats to water supplies, aquatic organisms, and non-targeted insects.

Environmental, religious and student groups are calling on TruGreen ChemLawn to (1) Phase out the use of pesticides; (2) Disclose all ingredients in their pesticide products, including the so-called inert ingredients; (3) Offer a comprehensive organic lawn-care program that does not use pesticides or synthetic fertilizers; (4) Protect workers while phasing out pesticides; (5) Stop using children to market its products.

Get Active: Take the pledge to refuse to use TruGreen ChemLawn, and help change the lawn care industry. Ask your neighbors to sign the pledge as well.

www.RefuseToUseChemLawn.org.

¹⁰ Wilson, Matthew and Rasku, Jay. *Refuse to Use Chemlawn, Be Truly Green*. Toxics Action Center. March 2005. Report available <http://www.refusetousechemlawn.org/report>



Pass a Local Policy

From San Francisco to New York City, with the urging of concerned residents, small and large communities have created local government policies to reduce the use of toxic lawn care chemicals. Some of these policies are binding commitments to change the practices on government-owned properties; some of them are advisory resolutions that urge the local government or local residents to eliminate the use of pesticides.

Often the best place to start building your support for a pesticide-free community is to make your local park pesticide-free—that's what Jason Rupaka did in Plainville, CT, a small community of about 17,000 people. Below is an excerpt from that community's policy:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the health of the citizens of Plainville, their water, the environment and Long Island Sound will benefit without further impact from the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides at Paderewski Park. And the Town Council urges all citizens to voluntarily refrain from the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and so encourages the use of organic lawn care.

Jason actually went a step further and asked individual citizens to pledge to be part of a Freedom Lawn Initiative, to stop using pesticides on their own property. To date, over 50 homeowners have pledged to be pesticide-free and over 160 acres in town are now pesticide-free. Jason's work is building support for an even broader pesticide-free policy in his community.

My dog has non-hodgkins lymphoma, which has been linked to lawn chemicals. Hope this 'green lawn' is worth it.

--Bill from Ohio

The Town of Carrboro, NC has adopted a similar policy. They successfully passed a least-toxic or integrated pest management policy in 1999. Their policy states:

The Town of Carrboro's IPM policy and program is a comprehensive approach that gives priority to prevention and management of pests including insects, weeds and plant disease by the least toxic method. The policy will reduce the environmental health risk to municipal employees, visitors and town residents. The policy will result in greater safety of public grounds, buildings and sports fields, reduced exposure to chemical pesticides by those engaged in pest management and by the environment, and as an example to residents and others.

Get Active: Work to gather support for a similar policy in your town. For a good listing of policies passed in communities across the country, please visit www.BeyondPesticides.org/lawn/activist/



Pass a Local Ordinance

While resolutions are advisory, ordinances result in formal changes to local law. Unfortunately, communities in the United States have been slow to pass ordinances to prevent chemical exposure. As we will explain further below, in some states, “pesticide preemption laws” limit the ability of governments to control chemical applications on privately owned properties. In those states, the best an ordinance can do is to eliminate the use of the chemicals on government-owned lands. On the other hand, Canadian by-laws have moved ahead to more broadly ban lawn care pesticides. You can work with your concerned neighbors to pass a local ordinance— reducing the use of pesticides in your community. Below is a passage from an organic ordinance that Chip Osborne (the greenhouse owner in the video) and the Marblehead Pesticide Awareness Committee passed in Marblehead, MA that bans pesticides on city-owned property:

Section IV – Prohibition

The use and application of toxic chemical pesticides, by Town of Marblehead employees and/or by private contractors, is prohibited on all Town-owned lands.

For a good listing of US and Canadian anti-pesticide ordinances, visit www.BeyondPesticides.org/lawn/activist/

Other ordinances get at the core of what allows pesticide spraying. The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) provides a good listing of ordinances, mostly passed on the East Coast. www.CELDF.org. Below are excerpts from the CELDF corporate chemical trespass ordinance:

Section 6. Statement of Law – Chemical Trespass

All residents of the Township of Liberty possess a fundamental and inalienable right to the integrity of their bodies, and thus, have a right to be free from unwanted chemical invasions of their bodies.

Section 7. Statement of Law – Prohibition

The deposition of toxic chemicals or potentially toxic chemicals within the body of any resident of Liberty Township is declared a form of trespass, and is hereby prohibited. No corporation or syndicate shall engage in the production, distribution, use, and/or sale of toxic chemicals and potentially toxic chemicals within the Township of Liberty.

I had a golden retriever who would play in the yard all the time. He ended up dying from a cancer that had come on rapidly and spread quickly. All this time I had been using Trugreen Chemlawn, never knowing....

--Nancy from New Hampshire



Take Back Local Control

In the United States, federal laws sometimes preempt or supercede state laws, and state laws sometimes preempt local laws. For most of the last century, local governments had the ability to restrict the use, sales and distribution of pesticides. In 1979, the people of Mendocino County (CA) attempted to restrict the use of phenoxy herbicides (like 2,4-D). Despite state objections, they successfully won their case (*The People v. The County of Mendocino*).¹¹ Unfortunately, the pesticide lobby recognized the significance of this victory and worked throughout the latter part of the century to pass laws restricting local control of pesticides. And they were very successful.

Currently, state preemption laws deny local residents and local and county governments the right to better protection in 42 states. Interestingly enough, the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government's pesticide laws do not preempt local laws (*Wisconsin Public Intervenor v. Ralph Mortier*).

The good news is that some states don't have pesticide preemption laws, and others are attempting to overturn them. The following states give communities local control over pesticides:¹²

- Alaska
- District of Columbia
- Hawaii
- Maine
- Maryland
- Nevada
- South Dakota
- Utah
- Vermont
- Wyoming

Communities across the country, like the Town of Fairfax, California, have attempted to chip away at these pesticide preemption laws by forcing local neighbor notification when pesticides are used. The combination of these grassroots efforts will give control of pesticides back to local governments.

Get Active: To get more involved, review the Resources section of this guide to learn more about how you can help take back local control.

¹¹ California Department of Pesticide Regulation. "Preemption: Federal, State and Local Jurisdiction Over Pesticide Use," *Regulating Pesticides: A Guide to Pesticide Regulation in California*, October 2001.

¹² Beyond Pesticides. "What is Preemption?" and "State Preemption Laws: A Beyond Pesticides Factsheet." March 2005.



RESOURCES

Work With a Local Organization

Need support for your local campaign? Want to get more involved? Here's a listing of some organizations that can help you protect pets from the dangers of lawn chemicals:

New England

Toxics Action Center (throughout New England): www.toxicsaction.org

East Coast

New Jersey Environmental Federation: www.cleanwateraction.org/njef/

South

Beyond Pesticides (DC & National): www.beyondpesticides.org

Toxic Free NC (NC): www.toxicfreenc.org

Midwest

Safer Pest Control Project (Chicago): www.spcpweb.org

Michigan Environmental Council: www.mecprotects.org

West Coast

Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (Oregon): www.pesticide.org

Pesticide Action Network of North America (CA & National): www.panna.org

Pesticide Watch Education Fund (CA): www.pesticidewatch.org

Washington Toxics Coalition: www.watoxics.org

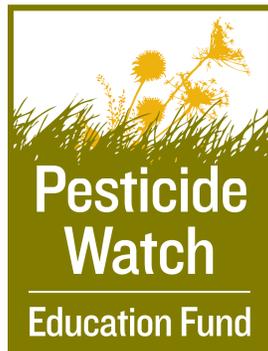
A more complete list of organizations can be found at the National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns: www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns/

Find a Local Organic Lawn Care Provider

Northeast Organic Farmers Association (NOFA) – (www.organiclandcare.net) – NOFA provides a comprehensive training and certification program for organic lawn care providers in New England, whether you want to learn yourself, or find a local provider.

Safety Source – (www.BeyondPesticides.org/safetysource/) – A national database of some non-toxic and organic lawn care providers hosted by Beyond Pesticides.

<p>VIDEO CREDITS</p> <p>Producer/Director/Videographer Sanford Lewis</p> <p>Associate Producer - Development Jody Shapiro, Ph.D.</p> <p>Associate Producer - Implementation Margaret Byrne</p> <p>Script Sanford Lewis Jody Shapiro</p> <p>Additional Videography Stephenie and Kelly Hendricks Bill Ravanese</p> <p>Assistants Carson Mitchell Adam Quiros Rebecca Rideout Vera Ventura Alex Cookman Ellen E. Hewitt</p> <p>Voiceover Brian Roberts</p> <p>Featuring Debora J. Lichtenberg, VMD Bernadette Giblin Bill Ravanese Mary Vogel Isabella Vogel Ravanese Jonathan Doyle Geoffrey Doyle Robin Olson Chip Osborne</p> <p>Show Dog People Katherine Fogler Susen Zeeco Barbara Cassidy Pauline Masaschi Judi Johnson David Johnson Jim Burke</p> <p>Thanks to the animal voicing talents of Alexandra Cowan Rythea Lee Mark Moti Zelman Tina Clarke Grace Bannasch</p> <p>Original Theme Song Composed & Performed by the legendary Jay Mankita JayMankita.com</p> <p>Fiscal Sponsorship Documentary Educational Resources (Trailer) Pesticide Action Network North America (Documentary)</p> <p>Citizen Action Guide and Grassroots Education Paul Schramski Pesticide Watch Education Fund</p>	<p>This video was made possible by grants from the Newman's Own Foundation Mitchell Kapor Foundation</p> <p>Special thanks to Karen Axelrod Patricia Beckett "Sam" Caragulian Kelly Crowley Elizabeth Doran Nicole Deming Larry Glickman, MPH, VMD, DrPH Gwen Griffith, DVM, MS Rebecca Gould Matt Herschler Walter Jonas Daniel Kinsey Andy Lichtenberg Sparky Moir Nadine Natle Rodney L. Page, MS, DVM Bennet Rathbun Laura Roberts Virginia Rowland Luke Q. Stafford Dina Stander Ellie Weiner Shoshana Weiner Bay Colony Cluster Dog Show</p> <p>And thanks to all the animals Murphy Delilah Ricky Selby Canal-Side's Keeping the Faith Dreamcatcher's Over the Rainbow Raspberry Blueberry's Susie Q Vinnie Bolton and Hatchet Piper Daisy Zooma Ricky Sophie Rumble Simon Carly Butterscotch April Bernie aka Wupper Miss Charlotte Captain Oats Princess Sparkle, and Moose, Jesse, Jessie & Sadie, waiting at the Bridge</p>
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