

April 8, 2002

## **Public consultations on reducing pesticide use**

### **What is being done to restrict pesticide use in Toronto?**

Several initiatives are in place to phase out or restrict pesticide use on public property. Toronto City Council committed to phasing out pesticide use on all public green spaces in December, 1998. The city's parks department has since reduced pesticide use by over 97 per cent.

City Council adopted a motion in November 2001 directing the Medical Officer of Health to "prepare a public discussion document and seek broad input on the nature and scope of a potential pesticides by-law."

The Toronto District School Board, and the French Public and Separate School Boards have strict policies in place prohibiting the use of pesticides on school property. Consumer demand for alternatives to chemical pesticides has created pressure in the market. Recently Loblaw Companies Ltd. announced it will stop selling the products at its gardening centres in 2003.

### **Can the City of Toronto ban the sale of pesticides?**

No. The sale of pesticides is regulated by the provincial government through the *Pesticides Act*. The City does not have legal authority to restrict pesticide sales in Toronto. To discourage residents from buying chemical pesticides, the City has been promoting alternative practices and providing educational materials to the public such as "The Green Guide to a Healthy Lawn."

### **What is happening in other jurisdictions?**

The City of Halifax is implementing a by-law to restrict pesticide use in three phases. In 2000, the city banned all pesticides on municipal property. In 2001, pesticide use was prohibited on all residential properties within 50 metres of persons at risk (with medical documentation), schools, daycares, parks, playgrounds, seniors' residences, universities, churches and hospitals. In 2003, a pesticides ban on residential properties takes effect. The by-law does not restrict pesticide use on commercial or industrial properties.

The Town of Hudson, Quebec, has implemented a general prohibition of pesticide use. Some exceptions apply, such as agricultural and indoor use of pesticides, and until 2005, pesticides use is permitted on golf courses.

The Quebec government has recently announced its intention to pass legislation prohibiting the cosmetic use of pesticides at all daycares, hospitals, schools and other public institutions.

The federal government has recently announced it will update federal pesticide legislation with the stated intention of protecting vulnerable population groups, particularly children, from exposure.

**What is the next step after the public consultation process?**

Following the public consultations, Toronto Public Health will summarize the input from residents and stakeholders. A report, with recommendations, will be prepared and forwarded to a Reference Group of City Council and the Pesticides Subcommittee of the Toronto Interdepartmental Environment committee for consideration. Recommendations will then be forwarded to City Council for consideration.

**Is it possible to have a beautiful, healthy lawn or garden without using pesticides?**

Certainly. Many lawn care companies and garden centres now specialize in organic gardening, and can offer expert advice and service. Most also stock alternatives to pesticides.

**Where can I get information on pesticide free gardens and alternatives to pesticides?**

The City of Toronto has information on reducing the use of pesticides. Call the Lawn Improvement Helpline at 416-397-5296.