

## A Made-in-Toronto Solution

On January 23, 2002, the City of Toronto engaged in a conversation with a community of stakeholders on the question of reducing the use of pesticides on lawns and gardens. Stakeholders came from pesticide manufacturing companies, lawn care companies (both “traditional” and “organic”), health care organizations, community garden groups, school boards, golf course associations, the provincial Ministry of the Environment, a rate payers association, the Toronto Transit Commission, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, the Canadian Environmental Law Association and many others. About sixty-five people shared their knowledge and insight to help start the conversation about the best ways to reduce pesticide use on lawns and gardens in Toronto.

The City of Toronto consulted with stakeholders in January 2002 about how it could best achieve reductions in pesticide use on lawns and gardens. Most of the stakeholders agreed that reductions in pesticide use on lawns and gardens were beneficial and possible.

The stakeholders proposed a variety of ways that reductions in pesticide use could be achieved. Many mentioned public education as an effective means to increase public knowledge about alternative ways to maintain beautiful properties that required fewer, or no applications of pesticides. Pesticide manufacturers and retailers suggested there might be ways for them to sell their products and inform their customers that could lead to reductions in the amount of pesticides applied to lawns and gardens. Representatives from the horticultural trades, including lawn care companies, indicated they could promote within their own industry integrated pest management, integrated plant health care, and pesticide-free lawn care services. Other stakeholders observed that a by-law could set out restrictions on the use of lawn and garden pesticides. Others observed that reductions could be satisfactorily achieved without resorting to a by-law.

Different stakeholders supported three different categories of ways to achieve the commonly accepted goal of reducing pesticide use.

- Education
- Voluntary initiatives by pesticide retailers, manufacturers and the horticultural trades
- A municipal by-law

The three categories can co-exist. Many stakeholders noted, for example, that public education would be a necessary component of any by-law, and that some industry initiatives could be upheld within a by-law. More information about these and other options will be available at the public consultation meetings.

The City of Toronto needs to hear now from its residents. What do you think would be the best way to achieve reductions in the use of pesticides on lawns and gardens?

