

WASHINGTON
TOXICS
COALITION

Alternatives

protecting health by preventing pollution

Sprayed to Death: Roadside Herbicide Use in Washington State Sprays Even in Counties that Don't

Angela Storey

We've all seen it — the brown strip of grass along our roads and highways. It is a telltale mark of the roadside herbicide applications performed by our cities, counties, and state agencies. Herbicides used range from RoundUp to mixtures of 2,4-D, dicamba, and other toxic pesticides. Runoff from roadside herbicide applications can reach our streams, affecting the ability of salmon to swim, spawn, detect predators, or fight off disease.

But clear roadsides don't have to mean danger for salmon. Cities and counties around Washington are reducing or eliminating their use of chemical herbicides for roadside vegetation maintenance. With pressure from citizen groups and local policymakers, some Washington municipalities are establishing least-toxic roadside maintenance programs that are models for the entire country.

Washington State

Potentially the worst violator in the state is the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Charged with maintaining more than 100,000 acres along state highways, the WSDOT uses herbicides that have been linked to cancer, developmental toxicity, endocrine (hormone) disruption, and groundwater contamination. WSDOT does have an Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) plan, and finds that where they have implemented IVM, their herbicide use has decreased. Despite these IVM programs, WSDOT reports that in the year 2000 alone they used more than 50,000 pounds of herbicides (active ingredients only!) just for gravel-shoulder maintenance along highways. This does not include noxious weed control (another 20,000 pounds of active ingredients) or tree and brush control (5,000 pounds of active ingredients).

Some of those most upset about WSDOT's



resistance to reducing herbicide use are those who live in the six Washington counties that don't spray herbicides for county roadside management. "If the county has made a concerted effort to use non-chemical means to control vegetation along county roads, then the WSDOT should do the same," said Margaret Owens, who helps head up Clallam County No-Spray Coalition. The coalition is working to get WSDOT to stop using herbicides in at least Clallam and Jefferson Counties, two of the counties that don't spray their roadsides. The other no-spray counties are San Juan, Snohomish, Thurston, and Island. Activists in these other counties, including the group WINS (see below), have also become involved in pressuring the WSDOT to go no-spray.

"We've seen the effects of the WSDOT indiscriminately spraying creeks, wetlands, native plants, beaches, and blackberry bushes where people often go to pick berries," said Josey Paul, another Clallam organizer. In a letter to the WSDOT last fall, Paul wrote, "The DOT has

Herbicide Alternative: Brushing machines are used to control woody plants, such as the alder tree that has been leveled here. The machine takes the tree down in the first pass and mulches it in the second pass.

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Clean Water for Salmon

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moved into a policy of pesticides first. ... The spray cannon is often left on as a general debrasher for long stretches, 'nuking,' in the vernacular of the spray crews, our scenic highways."

Owens and Paul have worked tirelessly to prove to the WSDOT that their county will not tolerate the state spraying along its highways. The coalition now has support from local salmon groups, tribes, labor unions, biologists, business owners, citizens, and even the Clallam Bay/Sekiu Chamber of Commerce. WSDOT says they are currently drafting an IVM plan for the area, but it will definitely include the use of herbicides.

Washington Counties

It is not impossible, however, to move an agency on its pesticide use. The folks on Whidbey and Camano islands know that. WINS, the Whidbey/Camano Island No-Spray Coalition, is an incredibly dedicated group of community members that last spring convinced Island County to stop using herbicides in its roadside vegetation management.

"It is amazing what you can do with great people, good media coverage, and community support," said Nancy Schaaf, WINS vice-president. Concerned over the health and environmental impacts of herbicides, WINS worked diligently to get the county commissioners to end herbicide use. Members posted "No-Spray" signs along their property and distributed them among the islands. The local papers were constantly filled with letters, articles, and opinion pieces supporting non-toxic roadside management. WINS members lobbied the three commissioners, bringing them information on other Washington counties that have maintained beautiful and safe roadsides without the use of herbicides for more than 20 years. Schaaf says, "It was the public support that made the difference. We had the greatest outpouring of community support in Island County history over roadside spraying, and the commissioners knew they had to take action."

Washington Cities

Angeline Johnston is not quiet about her dedication to vinegar. On walks around her Richmond Beach neighborhood in Shoreline, north of Seattle, she talks with her neighbors about less-toxic gardening. The plain white vinegar she uses in her yard not only keeps it reasonably weed-free, but also safe for her 4-year-old, Riley, to play in.

After noticing the sudden appearance of dead

grass strips along the roads last spring, Johnston began looking into the City of Shoreline's herbicide use. She found that the City sprayed roadsides every other year, using sulfometuron methyl (Oust) and glyphosate (RoundUp), chemicals that have been linked to negative impacts on human health and the environment. "Particularly worrisome was that the City sprayed the grassy shoulders along parks where children are constantly walking, and along roads that lead down to the Sound, not 200 feet away," she said.

With her husband and a group of neighbors, Johnston formed the Vinegar Brigade in order to stop roadside spraying and educate the community about least-toxic gardening. In the first meeting with the city, Shoreline agreed to start a pilot project in Richmond Beach. They will not spray roadsides there, instead educating homeowners to help control weeds along their property. The city will also mow roadsides around parks throughout Shoreline.

"This is a great start," Johnston said. "We are looking forward to getting the city to expand the no-spray program to all of Shoreline. We hope the City strives to be an example to residents and continue to reduce their pesticide use." ■

"Particularly worrisome was that the City sprayed the grassy shoulders along parks where children are constantly walking, and along roads that lead down to the Sound, not 200 feet away."

—Angeline Johnston

Take Action!

Input from the public is the only thing that will sway the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The state of California does not use herbicides on highways in counties that have decided to stop spraying. WSDOT should do the same.

Please take a moment and contact the Washington Transportation Commission and copy your letter to Governor Locke. Ask them to stop using herbicides for highway vegetation control in counties that do not spray their roadsides.

Washington Transportation Commission
Mr. Aubrey Davis, Chair
PO Box 47308
Olympia, WA 98504-7308
E-mail: transc@wsdot.wa.gov

Governor Locke
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002
E-mail comments from the governor's website:
<http://www.governor.wa.gov/contact/govemail.htm>

Healthy Schools and Communities

Thurston County Proves Pesticide Reduction Works in the Long Haul

Erika Schreder

When residents of Thurston County started pressing for reduced pesticide use in the late 1980s, they had few models to look to. It took two years for a Citizens' Advisory Committee to develop a pest and vegetation management policy for the county. Leaders included members of the Audubon Society and Sierra Club, who built a base of support with the assistance of the Washington Toxics Coalition. Jean McGregor, who represented the Black Hills Audubon Society, said, "We wanted to break the cycle of chemical dependence in the county around herbicide use." Today, the county has one of the most comprehensive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs in the country, and county departments use few to no pesticides.

Creating an IPM Program

Shortly after the policy was adopted, the county hired Mark Swartout to serve as its IPM Coordinator. Mark now has a four-inch-thick binder containing the written IPM programs of each county department, together with specific prescriptions for each department on how it will deal with certain pest problems. The "IPM programs" provide general guidance to the department on how it will manage pests and vegetation. For example, for roads and transportation, the program lists goals such as protecting water quality and encouraging native plants. The department now uses no pesticides for regular vegetation management, using mowing instead, and applies pesticides only to control noxious weeds.

Once the programs and prescriptions were developed, departments found that in most cases they could manage with no pesticides or least-toxic pesticides. The facilities department finds the best way to deal with indoor pest problems is to correct the structural problems that allow the infestation. In a covered walkway, rotten wood that harbored ants was removed and boric acid applied to prevent future problems. According to Mark, "Unless you deal with the structural problem, you can spray until you're blue in the face and you won't get rid of insects."

Restrictions on Pesticide Use

Any pesticide proposed for use must be approved by the Thurston County Environmental

Health Division or the Board of Health. Pesticides may not be used if they are linked to cancer, reproductive or developmental toxicity, if they are mutagenic, if they are mobile or persistent, or if they have high acute toxicity. Other factors that are considered include degradation products, aquatic toxicity, and bioaccumulation. No product may be used if its inert ingredients (all ingredients besides the active ingredient) are considered to have a known or suspect toxicological concern by the EPA. Under this policy, nine pesticides are currently approved for use within the prescriptions developed by departments.

Accountability and Public Involvement

Since the policy was first established, the county has made a practice of releasing annual reports detailing pesticide use. Mark says, "We shine a bright light on what we do because public advocates are the way we can keep the political will to continue the program." To provide ongoing citizen oversight to the program, the policy created the Pest and Vegetation Management Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from the agricultural and environmental communities as well as citizen representatives. According to Mark, the committee has provided important expertise and has served as a key body for developing solutions for persistent management problems. ■

This story is an abridged chapter from WTC's new report, Growing Trends: Successful Strategies for Reducing Pesticides in Public Places. The full report can be ordered for \$5.00 each plus postage and Washington sales tax by calling 206-632-1545 ext. 7. It is also available as a downloadable PDF file on the Publications page of our website.



Thurston County Receives Pesticide Reduction Trendsetter Award

The Washington Toxics Coalition presented Thurston County with a *Pesticide Reduction Trendsetter Award* in recognition of their dedication to reducing pesticide use. Mark Swartout from Thurston County says, "This award not only speaks well for the county's efforts to reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals, it reinforces the work done by the study committee ... to come up with a policy that was better for the environment and also better for the citizens of Thurston County."

WTC is pleased to support the efforts of entities like Thurston County that make their dedication to protecting the health of their citizens and environment not just in rhetoric, but in action. Congratulations, Thurston County!

Toxic-Free Legacy

Mercury Bill Action Alert



Many people fish in urban waterways, such as the Duwamish River shown here, and can take home fish with high levels of mercury contamination.

The Washington Legislature is currently considering HB 1002 / SB 5124, an important bill aimed at reducing mercury pollution in Washington. The bipartisan bill has broad support from local governments, fishing groups, medical associations, religious leaders, and environmental groups. But we also face stiff opposition from polluting industries. You can help pass this important bill by:

1. Calling your legislator and urging them to support HB 1002 / SB 5124. Call 800-562-6000 to leave a message for your legislators. Your message should be short and simple — Support HB 1002 / SB 5124 to protect our health and waterways from mercury pollution.

2. Writing a letter to your local senator or representative. A sample letter is below:

The Honorable (State Senator's Name)
PO Box 40482
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable (State Representative's Name)
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

For more information, visit our website at www.watoxics.org.

Sample Letter

Dear Washington State Legislator,

Mercury is an extremely toxic substance that can have devastating impacts on human health and the environment. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that 60,000 infants that are born each year are at risk of neurological problems caused by exposure to mercury in the womb. The state has issued warnings about eating mercury-contaminated fish in four waterbodies in Washington, as well as statewide warnings for eating tuna steaks, shark, swordfish, tilefish, and king mackerel. Mercury is one of the most serious pollution problems facing our state.

I am writing to urge you to support common-sense legislation to reduce mercury pollution in Washington. In the coming legislative session, please support HB 1002 / SB 5124, a bill that will:

- Phase out the sale of products that contain mercury and that have readily available, cost-effective alternatives, including thermometers, thermostats, manometers, and auto switches;
- Require manufacturers of automobiles, thermostats, and compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) that contain mercury to bear primary financial responsibility for the creation and maintenance of effective collection, recycling, and disposal systems. This will help to prevent the dangerous disposal of mercury products in the solid-waste stream and save taxpayers money in clean-up costs;
- Support consumer right-to-know by requiring the labeling of lamps that contain mercury; and
- Establish state government as a leader by requiring that they purchase non-mercury products where feasible.

Thank you for considering this important issue.

Sincerely,

State Fails to Protect Consumers From Mercury-Contaminated Fish

Laurie Valeriano

The Washington State Department of Health is failing to protect residents from eating mercury-contaminated fish caught in local rivers, lakes, and Puget Sound, according to a report released in November by the Washington Public Interest Research Group (WashPIRG) and the Washington Toxics Coalition. The report found that a disorganized fish advisory program, inadequate resources, limited testing and monitoring, and insufficient warnings for the public are among the top problems that put the health of Washington residents, especially pregnant women and young children, at risk.

"Fish are good food but not when they are contaminated with mercury and other chemicals. We want to make sure that all people, especially pregnant women and young children are able to eat fish as part of a healthy, balanced diet," said WashPIRG's Ivy Sager-Rosenthal. "Residents, especially those who are pregnant or have young children have a right to expect that the state is protecting them from unsafe fish. Unfortunately, our report found that the state is failing them."

Mercury is toxic to the developing fetal brain, and exposure in the womb can cause learning deficiencies and can delay mental development in children. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that 10% of American women of childbearing age already have mercury in their blood at levels that the National Academy of Sciences considers potentially unsafe for the developing fetus. There are currently 13 fish advisories in Washington, five of which are due specifically to mercury.

The report found:

- ❖ When mercury monitoring uncovers a potential fish-contamination problem, health officials are slow to react.
- ❖ A state fishing guide published by the Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends fishing in waterways currently the subject of a fish advisory.
- ❖ Inconsistent and inadequate fish advisories.
- ❖ Inadequate public notice about mercury-contaminated fish, such as insufficient signs at fishing sites.

*Continued on page 5, please see **Fish***

Toxic-Free Legacy

Toxic-Free Legacy Campaign Receives Major Boost

Gregg Small

WTC's Toxic-Free Legacy Campaign received a major boost in December with the welcome news of a major grant from the John Merck Fund. The John Merck Fund, based in Boston, awarded WTC and our coalition allies \$200,000 to expand and continue our work to eliminate and clean up the class of persistent toxic chemicals (PBTs) that includes mercury, dioxin, PCBs, and a number of other highly toxic chemicals.

Over the past several years, the campaign has won a number of important victories, including convincing the Department of Ecology to pass a first-in-the-nation policy to eliminate and clean up PBTs; shutting down several incinerators; and winning passage of a groundbreaking purchasing policy by the City of Seattle that will shift their buying toward products that do not contain PBTs or produce PBTs through their production.

Now, our coalition is focused on expanding our efforts to win further public health and environmental protections. Coalition priorities include passing legislation to reduce mercury pollution; reducing pollution coming from major industrial sources in the state; quickly and effectively cleaning up pollution at toxic waste sites; and implementing Seattle's groundbreaking purchasing policy. Other coalition partners include People for Puget Sound, WashPIRG, Physicians for Social Responsibility – Washington, the Healthy Building Network, and more than a dozen other groups.

The Toxic-Free Legacy Campaign also receives generous support from the Mitchell Kapor Foundation, New Priorities Foundation, Bullitt Foundation, Beldon Fund, Social Venture Partners, and the Burning Fund, as well as the contributing members of Washington Toxics Coalition.

We want to thank the John Merck Fund and all of our other generous donors for helping to make our work on this issue possible. ■

Fish, continued from page 4

We recommend that the state take aggressive action to reduce mercury pollution and at the same time take measures to help pregnant women and children avoid unsafe levels of mercury in fish.

The report also specifically recommends that

Mercury Going Down

Brandie Smith

In the midst of the excitement of the mercury bill moving through the state legislature, the King County Board of Health (KC-BOH) is doing its part to contribute to the excitement at a local level. On February 21, 2003 the KC-BOH will hold a briefing on a proposed rule to ban the sale of mercury thermometers in King County. If such a rule passes, King County will join more than 20 other cities and counties around the country in their commitment to protect human health and the environment from mercury pollution.

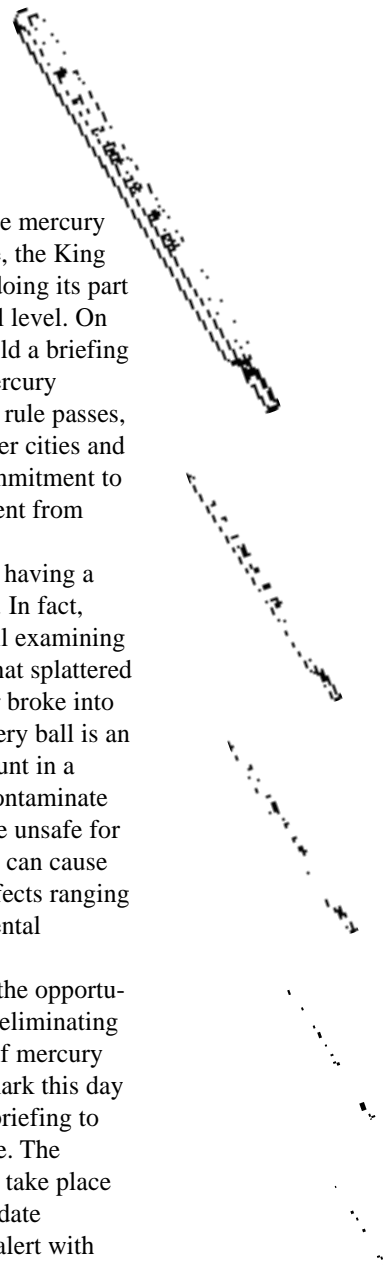
Most of us can probably remember having a mercury thermometer around the house. In fact, many probably still do. Some may recall examining the intriguing, silvery ball of mercury that splattered all over the floor when the thermometer broke into pieces. Little did we know that this silvery ball is an extremely toxic substance, and the amount in a thermometer (one gram) is enough to contaminate the fish in a 20-acre lake so that they are unsafe for human consumption. Mercury exposure can cause permanent damage to the brain, with effects ranging from hearing and visual problems to mental retardation and learning disabilities.

On February 21, the KC-BOH has the opportunity to take a much needed step toward eliminating mercury pollution by banning the sale of mercury thermometers in King County. Please mark this day on your calendars and come out to the briefing to show support for the passage of this rule. The meetings usually begin at 9:30 a.m. and take place in the King County Courthouse. As the date approaches, we will send out an action alert with more details or you can give us a call at 206-632-1545 ext. 18. ■

the Department of Health:

- ❖ Be designated and funded by the Legislature to develop and implement a fish advisory program;
- ❖ Coordinate mercury fish testing with the Department of Ecology and actively assess testing results; and
- ❖ Improve communication of risks to the public by developing and coordinating a statewide public-education program to alert consumers about risks of eating mercury-contaminated fish.

A copy of the report is available at our website: www.watoxics.org. ■



Clean Water for Salmon



WTC Joins Other Environmental and Fishing Groups to Seek Court Action to Limit Pesticide Pollution

Erika Schreder

Washington Toxics Coalition, Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, and the Institute for Fisheries Resources have filed for an injunction in Seattle Federal District Court to limit the pesticide uses most likely to harm salmon. This move follows a July court ruling, which forces the U.S. EPA to ensure that it does not allow pesticide uses that harm endangered salmon. WTC and our allies are seeking the injunction to put interim protections in place until EPA brings its pesticide regulations into compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

The interim protections listed in the injunction include:

- ❖ establishing a 100-yard no-spray zone to protect salmon from aerial applications of pesticides near salmon streams;
- ❖ establishing a 20-yard no-spray zone to protect salmon from ground applications of pesticides near salmon streams; and
- ❖ instituting a ban on homeowner (non-licensed) use in urban areas of certain pesticides likely to harm salmon.

In July, Judge Coughenour ordered the EPA to initiate consultations with the National Marine Fisheries Service on protection of salmon from 54 pesticides. These consultations mark the first step toward ensuring pesticide use will not wipe out threatened and endangered salmon.

The no-spray buffers sought in the injunction filing would apply to the 54 pesticides in the July court order. WTC and our allies are asking the court to put these measures in place while EPA complies with last summer's order.

"This is a step toward restoring salmon that could bring back tens of thousands of fishing jobs and a billion-dollar industry to our region," said Glen Spain of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations.

To view the injunction brief visit www.earthjustice.org. ■

EPA Fails to Protect Endangered Species from Pesticides

Erika Schreder

Since the passage of the Endangered Species Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has failed to uphold its legal duty to protect salmon and other endangered species from the impacts of pesticides. In December 2002, EPA finally proposed a program to protect endangered species from pesticides. Unfortunately, the program is extremely weak and will do very little to protect these species on the brink of extinction. We need to tell EPA that it must obey the Endangered Species Act and create a program that makes sure endangered species aren't harmed by pesticides.

Background

On December 12, 2002, EPA proposed a program to address the risks pesticides pose to endangered species. This action comes shortly after a court decision that ordered the EPA to initiate consultations with the National Marine Fisheries Service on protection of salmon from 54 pesticides. Several other cases are seeking protection for species including birds and frogs as well. These lawsuits have likely provided the stimulus for EPA's proposal on how it will implement the results of the consultations, but the proposal falls far short of the protection needed.

A critical element of EPA's program is how it will impose use restrictions on pesticides to protect species, and how those restrictions will be communicated to farmers, consumers, and other pesticide users. EPA is proposing that pesticide-product labels will only direct pesticide users to either a website or to pamphlets at their state agricultural agency offices. Thus, label instructions would not include the actual restrictions on use to protect endangered species.

Your voice is needed to convince EPA to strengthen its program and ensure proper protection for endangered species.

EPA is accepting comments on its proposed endangered species protection program until March 3, 2003.

Please Tell EPA:

- ❖ EPA has a duty to ensure endangered species are protected from pesticides. Legally, EPA cannot let economic benefits outweigh the cost

"This is a step toward restoring salmon that could bring back tens of thousands of fishing jobs and a billion-dollar industry to our region."

***—Glen Spain
Pacific Coast
Federation of
Fishermen's
Associations***

Continued on page 10, please see EPA

Volunteer and Donor Recognition

Volunteers Were Invaluable in WTC's 2002 Achievements

In no other year has it been more apparent how instrumental volunteers are to the success of our organization. A record 121 volunteers contributed more than 1500 hours to our campaigns, organizational development, administration, outreach, and other areas of the organization. Major projects such as the redesign of our website, creation of the *Growing Trends* report, major-donor meetings, annual dinner celebration and auction and more could not have been accomplished without the help of dedicated individuals.

With the understanding that every bit counts, volunteers are involved in almost every aspect—from stuffing envelopes and staffing information tables at events to providing legal support and motivating lapsed members to rejoin. We appreciate our volunteers' commitment to making the world a safer place.

The following is a list recognizing volunteers who have contributed their time and skills to our organization during the year 2002. (The **bold** names indicate 20 or more hours of volunteer time.)

John Abbotts	Tracy Hendershott	Chuck Perov
Elizabeth Adams	Julia Hickox	Greg Peters
Winnie Adams	Elsie Higgins	Morgan Pettis
Karen Ahern	Candice Hoffman	Nick Polato
Margaret Archer	Adam Hollander	Sabrina Porter
Nayan Arora	Gil Holzmeyer	Christopher Pringer
Sarah Baker	Patty Holzmeyer	Robin Purcell
Kathy Banas	Stephanie Hutchinson	Karyn Quinlan
Rick Barrett	Payton Jay	Letha Radebaugh
Kelly Bengle	Sarah Jaynes	Tracy Reed
John Birnel	Emmie Johnson	William Rodgers
Rose Brown	Emily Jump	Jeffrey Routledge
Andrew Burkhalter	John Kaiser	Devon Shannon
Joey Calacat	Sheilah Kodimer	Brent Shriver
Amy Callahan	Alyssa Kreider	Sethu Siva
Janelle Carson	Bill Kuhn	Colin Smith
Karin Carter	Tai Lahans	Lindsay Smith
Mae Chevrette	Venessa Lange	Rita Smith
Mikey Cofer	Barbara Lebrun	Joanna Smither
Dale Cotton	Angie Lee	Katherine Sopher
Daphne Cuizon	Susannah Lewis	Chantal Stevens
Carol Dansereau	Kent Lin	Susan Stocking
Michael Doig	Elizabeth Loudon	Kristin Storey
Zoe Edelstein	Sarah Mackay	Sheila Taft
Kristin Elko	Ed Mays	Shannon Valderas
Ashley Evans	Tom McDonald	Kim Vederhoff
Myron Fao	Felicia Merritt	Janya Veranth
Dana Flanegin	Bud Metzger	Sharon Verschuyt
Melanie Forster	Bobbie Morgan	Austin Walters
Hillary Franz	Nancy Morrison	Eric Webb
Ellen Gallivan	Mary Nasry	Sheila Weir
Bob Gamble	Kate Nelson	Meredith Wenger
Paula Garrett	Elliot Newlin	Danielle Werner
Rachel Geissinger	Cathy Nolan	Elaine Willey
Marcie Griffin	Akiko Oishi	Anne Winter
Walt Halperin	Jae Ok	Ann Wong
Willa Halperin	Aaron Ostrom	John Wyble
Julia Harris	Lara Papadakis	Iris Yin
Sean Heavey	Mitchell Parrish	Melissa Zent
Erika Helmcke	Anna Parsons	Mike Zarate

Thanks to Our Members...

We would like to sincerely thank all of our members for your thoughtful support in 2002.

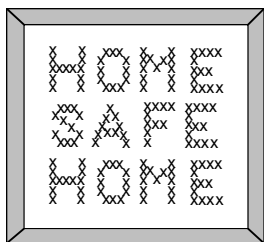
With your help, over the past year we were able to achieve a number of important accomplishments in our work to reduce toxic pollution.

Our successes would not have been possible without all of you. We deeply appreciate your concern for toxics issues and your support of Washington Toxics Coalition. Thank you!

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and companies who made monetary donations of \$100 or more to Washington Toxics Coalition in 2002.

44 Anonymous	Ursula Hall	Trapper Robbins and Roxanne
Charles and Florence Abbott	Julia Harris	Everett
Daniel Adams and Cynthia	Carolyn Heberlein	Zöe Rothchild
Toops	Lynn Henderson	Merrilee Runyan
Shirli Axelrod and Michael	Diane Horn	Francie Rutherford and Fred
Seamans	Kimmarie Howe	Wardenburg
Tanya and Aaron Barnett	Doreen Johnson	Corey Satten
Lolly Bates and Mark Early	Sara Jane Johnson	Erika Schreder and Gregory
Tom Bates	Cynthia and David Jones	Peters
Trudy Bialic	Mary and Stephen Keeler	Eva and Ron Sher
Jabe Blumenthal and Julie	Carolynn Kim-Prelutsky and	John Shimer and Cay Fortune
Edsforth	Jack Prelutsky	John and Frances Smersh
Beatrice and William Booth	Pamela Kliment	Marcella Smith Gilson
William Broadhead	Robert Koon	John Soderberg
Helen Buckland	Kelly Krieger	Mary Ann Spahr
Jack and Pat Bujacich	Mary Kudla	James Stephen
Barbara Cahill	Bill Kuhn	Jon Stier and Susan Elderkin
Phoebe Caner	Joyce Lang	David and Laurel Stitzhal
Joey Corcoran	Pamela Ledesma	Matthew Sweeting
Cynthia Creasey	Cara Beth Lee	Heather Trim
Lisa Crosby and Paul Becker	Ann Lennartz	Phil and Susan Unterschuetz
Jane and Paul Crowder	Arlene Levy	Arlene Wade
Therese and Jim Cushing	Craig Lorch and Julia Haack	Shawn Waliser
Carol Dahl	Chris Luboff	Joyce White
Martha Dale	Linda and Scott Lunda	Lisa Wolterink
Jean Diamond Sargent	Ruth MacGinitie	John Wyble and Jackie Brutz
Jennifer Dold and David	Heather MacPhail	Cheri Zehner and Kevin
Graves	Drew Markham	Fagerstrom
Judy Drake	Gail and Mike McCormick	Steve Zemke and Catherine
Cornelia Duryée Moore and	Karen McDonell	Griffith
Terry Moore	Brian and Deborah McGookin	Ed Zuckerman
Barbara and Jacob Engelstein	Werner and Marilyn Melcher	Bricklin Newman Dold LLP
Guy Eroncig	Suellen Mele	Columbia Gorge Organic Fruit
Chris Feise	Elizabeth Mitchell	Company
Mary and Paul Ferrari	Catherine Nolan	Country Save Corporation
Constance Gandolfi Voget	John Perkins	Emerald Valley Kitchen Inc.
Fred Geisler	Jim Peschel and Sue Gundy	Environmental Home Center
May Gerstle	Kate Pflaumer	Hendrikus Schraven
Emil and Robin Giese	Crispin Pierce	Landscaping Construction
Steven Gilbert and Janice	Robert Pregulman	and Design
Camp	Lemoine Radford	New Roots Organics
Claude Ginsburg and Lynne	Tracy Reed	Puget Consumers' Co-op
Hyerle	Mikhaila and Mark Reudink	Regional Commission on
Sally Goodwin and Kurt	Marney Reynolds and Page	Airport Affairs
Hoelting	Read	The Law Offices of David
Henry and Jennifer Gordon	Paula Riggert and Thomas	Mann
Michael Gross	Grismer	ToST Lounge
George Guttman	Gail Rinehart	

We truly appreciate all of our members and donors, and wish we could list all of them here — but space limitations prohibit it. This list excludes donors who have asked that their names not be publicized.



Home Safe Home

Bad Combinations: Multi-Purpose Pesticides Encourage Unnecessary Use

Philip Dickey

Sipping a 52-ounce soda (about half of what the average adult stomach can stretch to hold) while driving a van that gets 10 miles to the gallon, we telephone ahead to order a stuffed-crust, extra-cheese pizza that in a single meal will deliver twice the recommended daily allowance of saturated fat (and it comes with free cheese bread!). The American desire for convenience and over consumption carries over to our home landscapes, where the overuse of pesticides pollutes our streams and threatens the health of our children. Every year, Americans dump more than 100 million pounds of pesticides (active ingredients) on their lawns and gardens, nearly three times as much per square yard as farmers use.

Multi-purpose pesticide products put our lawns and gardens on auto-pilot, receiving regular and unnecessary doses of weed and insect killers while the homeowner is effectively asleep at the wheel. Popular combinations of pesticides with fertilizer, for example, are convenient but they take away the flexibility to fertilize without using a pesticide at the same time, when it may not be needed. Dr. Art Antonelli, extension entomologist for Washington State University, says combination products are not IPM. "These products are not about making good pest-management decisions. They are insurance sprays."

Weed and Feed

This is the granddaddy of all combination products. A mixture of up to three weed killers with a general purpose lawn fertilizer, weed and feed is one of the most popular home pesticide products. A homeowner who used weed and feed as their only lawn fertilizer could be applying these weed killers to the entire lawn four times a year, whether the lawn had any weeds or not. This overuse of pesticides leads to water pollution. Testing published in 1999 found two common weed and feed ingredients (2,4-D and MCPP) in every single stream tested near Seattle. Similar results have been found elsewhere in the country. Effects on aquatic



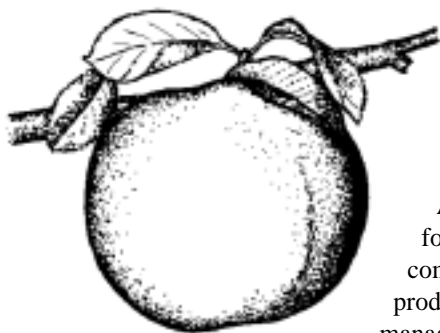
Some potting soil now includes insecticide as well as fertilizer, causing unnecessary toxic exposure to gardeners.

life at the levels found are unknown, but fish in these streams are already reeling from toxic or nearly toxic levels of five insecticides also found there.

Children are much more susceptible than adults to damage from pesticides. They pick up residues from playing on treated lawns, and 2,4-D is absorbed through the skin. Young children ingest residues when they put their hands in their mouth, and they track some of the material into the home on their shoes or bare feet. Intelligent parents should stop worrying about exactly how dangerous this is and focus instead on how unnecessary it is.

Landscape professionals are not big fans of weed and feed. According to E. J. Hook, landscape supervisor at the Woodland Park Zoo, weed and feed is expensive, wasteful, and doesn't get at the cause of the problem. "If a lawn has 20% weed coverage, the use of weed and feed still covers 100% of the area. Why throw away 80% of the product? Our IPM program focuses on elimination of the cause of the problem rather than treating symptoms."

So what's the alternative? Separate the weeding from the feeding. Leave grass clippings on the lawn, where they can provide about a quarter of the lawn's nitrogen needs. Supplement with a high-quality organic fertilizer at recommended rates. Focus on lawn maintenance practices such as aeration, thatching, topdressing, and overseeding. Water deeply but infrequently. For more information on



Growing your own fruit in your yard can be a rewarding experience, but can also drive many people to use very high-toxicity pesticides to control insects and disease. Watch for our announcement of a new fact sheet on fruit trees, due out later this year.

specific lawn care practices, order our lawn care fact sheet. Or better yet, get rid of the lawn and plant a garden!

Systemic Rose Care Products

Another combination product that's been around for a long time might be called "rose care in a can." These popular products combine a rose fertilizer with a systemic insecticide called disulfoton, trade name Di-Syston.TM This product is based on the premise that roses always get aphids, which unfortunately is almost true. The insecticide, a member of the neurotoxic family of organophosphates, is drawn into the plant, where it makes the whole plant lethal to aphids. Unfortunately, at the same time it makes the plant lethal to ladybugs that eat aphids, bees that pollinate the garden, and other beneficial insects. It also makes the plant potentially toxic to the gardener. Systemic rose care products are among the more hazardous pesticides available to the general public.

Sensible rose care begins with plant selection. Roses are prone to a range of insect and disease problems, and few are really trouble free. Still, their charms are hard to resist, so if you want roses, select varieties that offer some disease and insect resistance. Many lists are available, including Organic Gardening Magazine, the Rose Society, and cooperative extension offices around the country. Ask your nursery supplier for their favorites.

Roses need lots of sun, good air circulation, and enough water. Avoid overhead watering, which tends to spread diseases. Remove all leaves near the ground to prevent disease spores from splashing up on them when it rains. Fertilize with a quality fertilizer, one designated for roses if you like, but not one containing insecticides.

Aphids can be controlled with either a strong water spray, insecticidal soap, or a neem oil insecticide. Least-toxic disease controls include alkali bicarbonate (RemedyTM or a homemade baking soda solution), neem products, or sulfur. Some people swear by compost tea, a concentrated broth of microbes that you can brew yourself or purchase at some nurseries. For details, go to www.growingsolutions.com or www.soilsof.com/home.asp.

Home Orchard Sprays

These products have also been around for a long time. They contain a mixture of malathion, methoxychlor, and captan. You don't even have to know about pesticides to know that sounds like a bad lineup. Sold as a concentrate for use in a sprayer, these products are in EPA's highest toxicity

category. They contain two insecticides and a fungicide and will kill just about anything that moves. The problem is that the optimal timing for applying insect controls and disease controls on fruit trees is not the same. At best you will be applying some things that aren't needed at the time, and at worst you'll be killing bees if you try to do disease control while the trees are blooming.

Space doesn't permit discussion of fruit trees here. We're working on a fact sheet on the topic that will be available soon.

"Slug and Bug" Baits

Here's the product for people who don't want to waste time finding out what is eating their petunias. The solution: just kill everything that it could be, including slugs, snails, weevils, caterpillars, sowbugs, or cutworms. A mixture of metaldehyde (the slug part) and carbaryl (the bug part), these products are shaken out onto the ground and provide a carpet of death around your plants. Metaldehyde on the ground poses a major hazard to dogs. Carbaryl is a broad-spectrum insecticide that kills beneficial insects along with pests. Testing in King County found it in about 70% of streams sampled, in some cases at levels that may endanger fish.

Slugs can be a problem, that's for sure, but physical controls—hand removal, traps, and copper barriers—should be your main tools. If you need a slug bait, try the iron-based products (without insecticide) such as Worry FreeTM or Sluggo.TM Broadcasting insecticide on the ground should be avoided.

3-in-1 Potting Soil

Now here's a product we didn't know we needed (hint: that's because we didn't need it). It's got the soil, the fertilizer, and a systemic insecticide (imidacloprid) all combined. When you plant a seed or a transplant, the growing plant takes up both its nutrients and the insecticide, making it deadly to any insects that chew on it. Except for maybe a Chia Pet, how could gardening be easier?

It's time to take off the training wheels, kids. Learn about soil, about fertilizers, and about insects. Most insects aren't harmful, and most transplants do just fine without being grown in insecticide. Don't put transplants outside until they're large enough to fend for themselves, or surround them temporarily with collars to keep out marauding soil dwelling insects or netting to screen out flying insects. Plant out some extras as insurance and then thin out the weaklings. ■



Roses are one of the most popular plants in home gardens. Many pest- and disease-resistant varieties are available, and choosing them will reduce your need for rose-care pesticides.



Hunting down slugs where they hide and physically removing them is one of the best ways to reduce their population and lower the chances of them damaging your plants.

Point of View

Be Quick to End Mercury Pollution

By L.B. Sandy Rock and Steven G. Gilbert

The debate over mercury pollution and what to do about it is heating up in Washington state and around the globe.

After numerous public meetings and an extensive public comment period, the Department of Ecology will finalize a comprehensive plan for reducing the release of mercury in the state. And, in the next several months, state legislators will consider a bill to reduce some sources of mercury pollution in Washington.

The actions that they take, or don't take, will have a lasting impact on the health of children and the environment in Washington for many decades to come.

Mercury is a natural element that enters the environment from rock formations and volcanoes. But over the past century, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the amount of mercury entering the environment has increased fivefold due to a wide variety of human activities, ranging from coal-burning power plants and waste incinerators to common consumer products that contain mercury such as thermostats and thermometers and dental amalgams.

The mercury that enters our environment eventually makes its way into the air, water and food, and comes at a significant cost to our health and the environment. Mercury is a potent neurotoxicant that can damage the central nervous system, kidneys, and liver, even at very low levels.

It is especially hazardous to pregnant women and children, causing problems such as birth defects and learning disabilities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that one in 10 women of child-bearing age is exposed to mercury at levels above which harm could occur. And a National Academy of Sciences study in 2000 estimated that 60,000 U.S. infants a year face increased risk of brain damage because their pregnant mothers had elevated mercury levels.

Currently, 30 parts of 10 waterways in Washington fail to meet water quality standards for mercury, including Central Puget Sound, Commencement Bay and the Snohomish River. Worse, because only limited testing has been done for mercury in Washington's waterways, there is much that we do not know. Even low levels of mercury pollution in our waterways increase the levels of mercury in fish, and therefore have the potential to cause significant health problems for pregnant women and young children that consume mercury-contaminated fish. ■

L.B. Sandy Rock, M.D., is chairman of the Environment and Health Committee of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility. Steven G. Gilbert, Ph.D., is a toxicologist, director and founder of the non-profit Institute of Neurotoxicology and Neurological Disorders, and a WTC board member. This article first appeared in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer on January 3, 2003.

Even low levels of mercury pollution in our waterways increase the levels of mercury in fish.

EPA, continued from page 6

- to fish and wildlife.
- ❖ Restrictions on pesticide use must be mandatory and appear on the pesticide product label, not in pamphlets or on a website. Labels must include the name of the species to be protected, what restrictions apply, and where they apply.
 - ❖ EPA must consider all the ways that pesticides harm endangered species. Currently, EPA's assessment is based on how much of the pesticide it takes to kill an organism. EPA must ask the experts at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service how to determine whether a pesticide harms an endangered species or its habitat.

Send Comments To:

Public Information and Records Integrity Branch
Office of Pesticide Programs
Environmental Protection Agency (7502C)
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20460-0001
Attention: Docket ID Number OPP-2002-0311

You can also submit comments by e-mail to opp-docket@epa.gov, Attention: Docket ID Number OPP-2002-0311.

Please see the sample letter on the following page for ideas on writing your own comments.

Continued on page 11, please see Sample Letter

Sample Letter, continued from page 10

Sample Letter

The Environmental Protection Agency has failed for many years to protect endangered fish, birds, and other organisms from the harmful effects of pesticides. It is time that the agency took its duty under the Endangered Species Act seriously, and created an Endangered Species Protection Program that has mandatory restrictions on pesticide use that will truly protect species.

EPA's current proposal falls short of ensuring real protections in a number of ways. EPA must modify this proposal and create a program that ensures endangered species are protected and does not balance the needs of species with the supposed economic benefits of pesticide uses.

EPA's program cannot rely on obscure pamphlets and information on a website and expect pesticide users to find and comply with this information. Rather, restrictions to protect species must be prominently displayed on the pesticide label, and the label must have all the information

necessary for pesticide users to comply with the law and protect endangered species.

Finally, EPA can no longer use its outdated and insufficient methodology for determining which pesticides pose a threat to endangered species. EPA must consult with the expert agencies to develop appropriate methodology to determine the effects of pesticides on endangered species.

EPA has put populations of endangered species at risk from the harmful effects of pesticides for far too long, and the agency must use this program to create mandatory and well-communicated restrictions to ensure that pesticide uses no longer harm endangered species. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Your name
Your address

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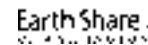
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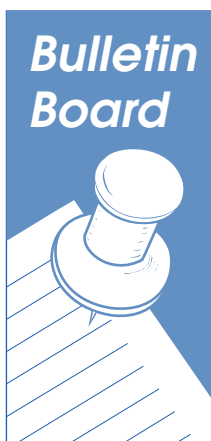
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Thank you for joining Washington Toxics Coalition's Advocates Circle!



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We are grateful to all of the foundations and agencies that awarded us grants last year. Below is a list of all of the foundations from whom we received funds in 2002.

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Is Your Contribution Tax Deductible?

Although that April 15 tax deadline is still weeks away, for many people, thoughts are already turning to taxes. Generally speaking, all contributions to the Washington Toxics Coalition, including membership dues, are 100% tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Notable exceptions, such as event tickets or auction items, will be only partially deductible, if at all, depending on the amount of the donation and the relative value of the item. Some items, such as subscriptions and other purchases are not tax deductible.

For more specific information about your deductions, please consult your personal accountant or the Internal Revenue Service, which operates an excellent website at www.irs.gov.

If you would like a duplicate receipt for any contribution, or a summary of your 2002 contributions to WTC, please contact Jeff Cohn at 206-632-1545 ext. 10 or jcohn@watoxics.org. ■

Match Making

Would you like to double or even triple your contribution to WTC? Even in today's economy, most large corporations and many small businesses maintain a matching-gift program. In the past year, we received nearly \$5,000 in corporate matching gifts!

It's a simple process: the donor fills out a form and includes it with the donation or sends it in separately. Upon receipt of the gift, we complete the form and return it to the corporation. In a few weeks we receive a check matching your gift. Ask your human resources director for information about the program where you work. It's not too late to double your holiday contribution. ■

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