



Pesticide Alternatives

The District of Saanich is joining the growing trend for Canadian municipalities to raise awareness about the potential negative health and environmental impacts of pesticide use in our communities.

What are pesticides?

Pesticide is a general term for any substance (usually synthetic chemicals or biological) designed to control or eliminate undesired organisms such as weeds, rodents, fungi, bacteria and insects. The term “pesticide” encompasses the more specific terms such as insecticides (for insects), herbicides (for weeds) and fungicides (for fungus).

Why reduce the use of Pesticides?

The risks associated with the use of some pesticides include impacts to human health, impacts to non-target plants and animals, pollution of watercourses, and long-term contamination of soil and groundwater.

History of pesticide reduction in Saanich

In 2003, the District of Saanich implemented an Integrated Pest Management Policy and has steadily reduced its use of pesticides over time.

On June 2, 2008 the District of Saanich took the Pesticide Free “Pledge” to eliminate the use of synthetic pesticides on the grounds at Municipal Hall and other highly visible areas such as recreation centers, and boulevard flower displays. To find out more about Saanich’s commitment to the Pesticide Free Pledge, visit: <http://www.saanich.ca/resident/parks/index.html>

Please click on the sign if you would like to take the pledge or visit: <http://www.crd.bc.ca/takethepledge/>



Pesticide reduction – a regional approach

Saanich Environmental Services works with The Capital Regional District (CRD) Roundtable on the Environment to explore ways in which the District can participate in pesticide reduction initiatives. This working group has already taken several steps towards their vision to reduce in the short-term, and eliminate in the long-term, non-essential pesticide use in the region.

Education

The first component is a Public Education Program which is already underway. The benefits of a regional approach to education includes the recognition that purchasing pesticides and the impacts associated with their use, crosses municipal boundaries. This program focuses on pesticide alternatives for lawn care and the benefits of reducing lawn areas all together, which in turn ties in with reduced water consumption, reduce fertilizer use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating the need for gas mowers.

The CRD has created a series of fact sheets, posters, and leaflets about pesticide alternatives. These resources can be accessed from the CRD's website: www.crd.bc.ca/rte/pest/info_resources.htm or can be picked up from their office at 625 Fisgard Street or at the Saanich Municipal Hall. By following simple steps and good maintenance practices, you can avoid using pesticides altogether. For example to maintain a healthy lawn:

Five Steps to a Healthy Lawn:

- 1. Mow on a high setting**
- 2. Leave grass clippings on the lawn**
- 3. Water wisely - only 1" (2.5 cm) per week**
- 4. Aerate and de-thatch as needed**
- 5. Take leftover pesticides to an authorized dealer**

Next steps for Pesticide reduction in Saanich

The second component to the regional approach is a model pesticide-use bylaw which is being considered by individual municipalities. A CRD public survey indicates 76% of residents would support a bylaw. To view the model bylaw, including a pesticide exemption list, please visit:

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/rte/pest/index.htm>.

On May 12, 2008 Saanich Council directed Saanich staff to explore the process of drafting a bylaw addressing non-essential pesticide use, allowing for sufficient time for education before enforcement.

In Canada, it is estimated that approximately 150 municipalities have adopted or are working on enacting pesticide-use bylaws.