

Why Reconsider Our Current Pesticide Use?

There is a growing scientific body of evidence that commonly used products are not as harmless as we thought.

- **EPA registration does not mean products are safe.** A common misconception is that the EPA's job is to decide which products are safe and which ones are not. The EPA does not perform testing. Rather, the EPA estimates toxicity to a certain population of people against the economic benefits of allowing a product to be sold, in spite of that product's toxicity. Additionally, it is most common that only individual "active" ingredients of products are required to be tested by the manufacturer - the entire formulations are not tested, nor are they tested in combination with other formulated products being used in the same landscape. Scientists have shown that combinations of pesticides can be far more dangerous. Furthermore, pesticide labels on containers reflect short term exposure concerns only (eg. eye and skin irritation, etc.), not potential long term affects such as cancer, neurological, or infertility issues.^{1, 2}
- **Organic methods and protocols are being successfully used in many cities today,** resulting in fewer weeds, softer fields, and greatly reduced water use. Training is readily available from experienced landscapers.
- **Our nation's health, especially that of children, is deteriorating** with over 54% currently diagnosed by HHS with a chronic health condition or learning issues. New York University doctors estimate that pesticide exposures cause an annual loss of 1.8 million I.Q. points in American children from neurological disorders. The numbers are increasing. Children are overwhelmed with toxins in our environment, and their buckets are full. Who among us does not know of such an affected child? People, pets, and wildlife are all being exposed to pesticides.
- **Recent legal actions** have shown that we have good reasons to question the wisdom of "doing things as we always have." The EPA's decisions fall far short of being fool proof. As time passes new technical information enlightens us on exposure hazards with chemicals like chlorpyrifos, atrazine, and now glyphosate that are either banned or have restricted use in the U.S. and/or other countries. In many locations though, some of these same toxic pesticides are still used in public places within the U.S. including school grounds. Decision makers responsible for safety of public places have an obligation to keep up with new information about pesticide toxicity.

The American Academy of Pediatrics:
"...Children's exposure to pesticides should be limited as much as possible."²

1. Children's Exposure to Pesticides and Childhood Cancers
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/Children's-Exposure-to-Pesticide-and-Childhood-Cancers.aspx>

2. Project TENDR: Targeting Environmental Neuro-Developmental Risks The TENDR Consensus Statement
<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/EHP358>

Organic Saves Money!

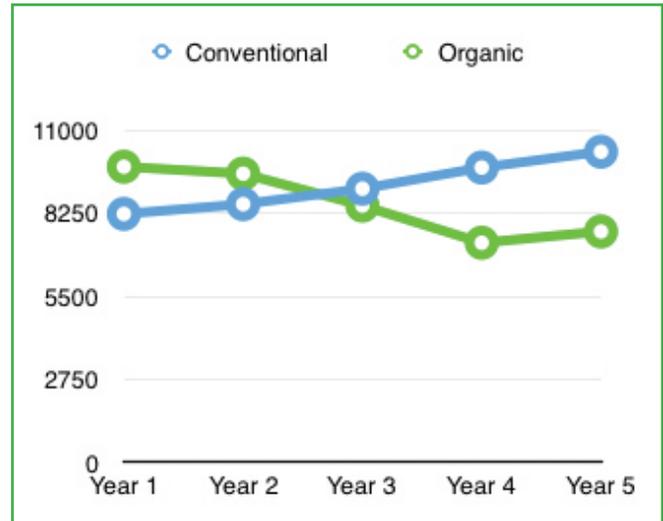
SO THE KEY QUESTION IS:

Why are we still using toxic pesticides in public spaces when safer alternatives are readily available?

A report comparing annual maintenance costs for a typical 65,000 square foot high school football field over 5 years using both conventional and organic management techniques finds that once established, an organic turf management program can result in savings of greater than 25% compared to a conventional turf management program.³

Mt. Lebanon School District in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's program implemented in 2000 is "manageable and no more expensive than using pesticides." The school district reports "a relatively low cost with improved playing surfaces."⁴

You can play an important role in preventing diseases linked to pesticide exposure, and protecting those who are most vulnerable. Organic land management practices will not increase costs, and are being implemented in communities throughout the U.S. Examples include Harvard and Yale Universities, numerous cities in Maine, Irvine, California, Springfield, Massachusetts, Yellow Springs, Ohio, all Connecticut school grounds grades K-8, all New York public schools, and more.



3. A Cost Comparison of Conventional (Chemical) Turf Management and Natural (Organic) Turf Management for School Athletic Fields <http://www.grassrootsinfo.org/pdf/turfcomparisonreport.pdf>

4. Smartschan, G.F. 2000. Superintendent of Schools, Mt. Lebanon School District, Pittsburgh, PA. Letter to U.S. Senator James Jeffords.



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