

Commentary... Perils of pesticides

By Diane Goble
Correspondent

Where have all the flowers gone? It's that old Pete Seeger song that comes back to haunt us as we are finally beginning to realize the damage done to the food chain by pesticides.

Brought to us by Dow AgroSciences to protect their genetically engineered crops is their chemical herbicide aminopyralid. Seven years ago, thousands of gardeners in the United Kingdom lost their tomatoes, beans and other sensitive crops to manure and hay laced with this potent, highly persistent herbicide. It was pulled from the market pending further study, but damage reports continue to mount as the extent of the problem becomes known.

The herbicide is sold in the USA as Milestone. Warnings about this herbicide's persistent toxicity came from a North Carolina State University horticultural study following a drought that caused animal owners to buy hay trucked in from other areas and people creating new vegetable gardens bought contaminated compost to use as

mulch. Residue levels were high enough three years later to damage tomatoes.

Pesticides are killing the bees and the Monarch butterflies — the pollinators of the food supply for all life on the planet. The butterflies are dying by the millions. The bees become disoriented and can't find their way back to the hive. It weakens their immune system. They bring contaminated pollen back to the hive. They all die.

Three months after trees in Wilsonville, Oregon, were treated with the pesticide Safari, 50,000 bees died in the Target store parking lot. Contaminated insects have caused high mortality in the populations of many migratory birds. Research has found that one seed contaminated with a neonic pesticide can kill a bird.

Aquatic animals are also poisoned since toxicity concentrations increase up the food chain. Animals that ingest contaminated fish are also negatively affected: osprey, eagles and other water birds, bear, otter and of course, people.

Reports from Argentina



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Pollinators are critical to a healthy planet. Don't poison them.

about birth defects found to have been caused by parental exposure to neonicotinoid insecticides (nicotine-like substances) sprayed on genetically modified farmlands are hard to come by, but are available if you search online. Other studies are indicating links to autism, ADD, and cognitive impairment among farmers and gardeners.

Who is buying herbicides and/or insecticides by the ton? U.S. highway departments, foresters, utility companies, and other big land managers, including horse and cattle owners to control perennial weeds — including milkweed, which is considered a noxious weed, but means survival to the Monarch butterflies during their migrations.

"So when a deer grazes on treated vegetation in the power cut behind my house

and relieves herself as she passes through my garden," asks Alex Barret, "who's responsible for the fact that some of my soil is now useless for growing beans, peas, lettuce, tomatoes and many other crops for four years or more?"

The good news is that Bi-Mart and Lowe's no longer sell products containing neonicotinoids, and The Home Depot is moving in that direction. If people stop buying it and stores stop ordering it, it's a clear message to Dow that people won't tolerate it.

Barret approached Sisters City Council last week after finding out from Public Works Director Paul Bertanga that his department sprays Milestone herbicide in the parks and campground where children play and our dogs roll around in the grass, where many of our visitors

camp — and was outraged.

Since meeting with the City, Barret has been in the process of writing an ordinance asking Sisters to initiate a program within the city limits to provide for best practices management for our community, similar to programs recently adopted by Eugene, Portland, Cannon Beach, Spokane, Seattle, Vancouver, and Shorewood, MN.

Starting with a presentation at Sisters Library last week, Barret is seeking support for this ban from the community, especially among the gardeners and farmers. She has gathered a lot of information and resources from national and international sources to help educate people and get them engaged in finding positive solutions. For more information call 541-610-5072.



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Studio 69217 lives its values of sustainability. Wendy von Kalinowski and Mark S. Smeltzer are very excited to become partners with 1% For the Planet, a nonprofit group that was founded in 2002 by Yvon Chouinard, a mountain climber and Patagonia founder, and Craig Mathews, fisherman and founder of Blue Ribbon Flies, on the belief that health and wellness come from the environment.

1% of donations of sales from its 1,200 members from 48 different countries in over 10 years have given back over \$100 million to the planet, supporting sustainable issues — alternate transportation, climate change, food, water, land and wildlife.

We are really thrilled to be able to work locally, give back locally (Wolfree, Deschutes Land Trust, Bend Paddle Alliance, and Defenders of Wildlife are all receiving members) and act globally through this foundation.

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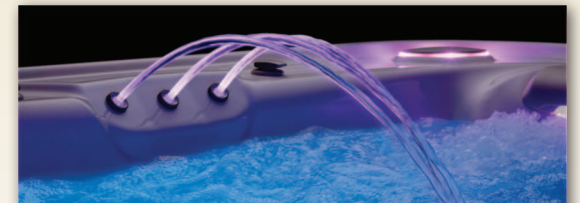
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