

Glyphosate isn't as harmless as you think



Gardening
Carol Savonen
Guest columnist

Q: Hi. I have a gardening question! I want to make some flower beds on our lawn wider and taller. The soil that is there is pretty compacted. I'm killing the grass (a little friendly glyphosate).

Can I just pile the new topsoil on top, or do I need to work it in, would you think?

I'm only thinking of a mound that's maybe 5" at the deepest point, so it's not going to be very deep. There are existing plants in most of it!

Thanks if you have any ideas!!!

A: First, I'd say nix the glyphosate. You can easily expand a bed without resorting to herbicide. More on that later.

Scalp the part of the lawn where you want to widen the bed, with a weed eater. Lay down a layer of cardboard, then a thick layer of newspaper on that. Next, pile on compost, fertile mix or whatever, about as twice as thick as you want; in your case double the amount you think

you need to 10 inches deep. By next spring, your ground should be mulched and your existing flower bed will be wider. No need to work up the soil beneath when widening..

Over time, keep adding more amendments, compost etc. to your entire bed. The worms will transfer nutrients to deeper layers. I've had a lot of luck doing it this way over the years.

Glyphosate (example: Round Up and other brands of broad spectrum herbicide widely available to homeowners) herbicides contain both the active ingredient glyphosate, and carriers or "inert" ingredients. Only the effects of the active ingredient are required on the use/warning label.

Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides <http://www.pesticide.org> has compiled a fact sheet on glyphosate based upon the scientific peer-reviewed literature and has summarized these findings in a fact sheet. <https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/ncap/pages/26/attachments/original/1519084542/GlyphosateFact-sheet.pdf?1519084542>

To summarize:

■ Glyphosate herbicides are the

most commonly used herbicides in the U.S. and the world. In agriculture they are widely used with genetically-modified glyphosate-tolerant crops, but they are also widely used in yards, gardens, and other nonagricultural areas.

Symptoms of exposure to glyphosate include eye irritation, burning eyes, blurred vision, skin rashes, burning or itchy skin, nausea, sore throat, asthma and difficulty breathing, headache, lethargy, nose bleeds, and dizziness.

■ Glyphosate and glyphosate-containing herbicides caused genetic damage in laboratory tests with human cells, as well as in tests with laboratory animals.

■ Studies of farmers and other people exposed to glyphosate herbicides have shown that this exposure is linked with increased risks of the cancer non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, miscarriages, and attention deficit disorder. For each of the hazards identified in these studies there are also laboratory studies with results that are consistent with the studies of exposed people.

■ There is also laboratory evidence

that glyphosate herbicides can reduce production of sex hormones. Studies of glyphosate contamination of water are limited, but new results indicate that it can commonly contaminate streams in both agricultural and urban areas.

Problems with drift of glyphosate herbicides occur frequently. Only one other herbicide causes more drift incidents.

■ Glyphosate herbicides caused genetic damage and damage to the immune system in fish. In frogs, glyphosate herbicides caused genetic damage and abnormal development.

Application of glyphosate herbicides increases the severity of a variety of plant diseases.

My point in including the science behind the product is to increase consumer awareness. Why not err on the side of caution when it comes to your own garden and family's property? Applying newspaper and cardboard vs. spraying a chemical that research has shown to be harmful to human and environmental health. Feel free to choose for yourself.

Recyclables

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lem recyclers used the exception for a one-time dump to clear a backlog of materials that had accumulated in their warehouses, others are taking recycling directly from the blue bin to the landfill, Spendelow said.

At the meeting, DEQ officials urged haulers to think about not taking recyclable material that is being dumped, or possibly eliminating recycling altogether.

"On the long term, does it make sense to keep collecting material if you're just going to keep disposing of it?" Spendelow asked.

But haulers and processors said that would mean consumers would need bigger bins for garbage, and would get out of the habit of recycling.

If markets improved, the bins would need switched again, and consumers would need to be retrained in proper recycling.

"I'm very optimistic the pricing's go-

ing to come back," said Dave Claugus, of Pioneer Recycling Services. "It just takes a while."

In Salem and Marion County, recycling has been scaled way back. Beginning in March, shredded paper, egg cartons, milk boxes and most plastic containers were banned from blue bins.

The changes angered and confused many residents, spurring a major education campaign by Garten Services, Marion County and haulers.

Following the campaign, Garten saw a slight decline in the amount of banned items it was receiving, spokeswoman Gaelen McAllister said.

But since then, levels have returned to where they previously were, she said. Recycling coming from Salem is particularly contaminated.

"There are always piles and piles of trash that we've pulled out of the recycling," McAllister said. "It takes a lot of education to get people to change behavior."

Contact the reporter at tloew@statesmanjournal.com, 503-399-6779 or follow at [Twitter.com/Tracy_Loew](https://twitter.com/Tracy_Loew)

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