



Are Pesticides Safe?

Defending the Planet One Beat at a Time

DID YOU KNOW?

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that over 2 billion pounds of pesticides are applied to food crops, homes, schools, parks, and forests each year in the United States alone.
- The World Health Organization estimates that more than 25 million people are poisoned by pesticides worldwide every year.
- The Pesticide Action Network Estimates that worldwide there are 200,000 deaths from pesticide poisoning each year.
- A study sponsored by the National Cancer Institute indicates that household and garden pesticide use can increase the risk of childhood leukemia as much as seven-fold. Other studies have shown that children living in households where pesticides are used suffer elevated rates of leukemia, brain cancer and soft tissue sarcoma.
- Many of the so called “inert” ingredients in pesticides are known human carcinogens or toxics.



The bottom line:

"Pesticides are not 'safe.' They are produced specifically because they are toxic to something."
-U.S. EPA, Citizen's Guide to Pesticides, 1987

IS PESTICIDE SPRAYING FOR MOSQUITOES SAFE AND EFFECTIVE???

Many communities in the United States spray pesticides in and around our neighborhoods and recreational areas as part of mosquito control programs, often in response to reported cases of West Nile Virus in humans or birds. While West Nile Virus is a potential public health threat, the risks to human health, pets, wildlife, and water quality posed by exposure to pesticides likely outweigh the potential benefits of spray programs. Some key facts from beyondpesticides.org:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that spraying is usually the least efficient mosquito control technique; it is far more effective to try to control mosquitoes at the larval stage of life than at the adult stage.
- Sprayed pesticides kill all of the flying insects they contact, including natural mosquito predators such as dragonflies.
- It is estimated that sprayed pesticides typically contact far less than 1% of any given mosquito population. In one Florida study, mosquito populations surged back to pre-spray levels within three days of the aerial application.
- According to the New York City Department of Health, in 2000, more people were reported to have gotten sick from pesticide spraying than from exposure to West Nile Virus: 157 people reported illness as a result of exposure to pesticides used for mosquito control, while only 19 people were hospitalized for West Nile Virus.

WHAT IS ROCK THE EARTH DOING TO HELP?

Rock the Earth actively monitors the legislative process of the U.S. government and carefully evaluates any proposed legislation or rules that are pesticide-related. In October 2003, Rock the Earth filed a comment letter with the EPA on a proposed rule that would have exempted the aerial application of pesticides to waterways from any type of environmental impact review. Rock the Earth argued that such a rule change was patently illegal and against the precepts of the Clean Water Act. Many of the legal arguments that we presented have since been upheld in court.

Rock the Earth partners with other environmental organizations to promote sustainable practices that are protective of human health and the environment.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- Educate yourself on the hazards posed by pesticides and alternative safe practices like Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Take inventory of the pesticides in your own household and properly dispose of those that you don't absolutely need
- Make sure that all of the pesticides in your house are stored in a secure and safe place – inaccessible to children and pets
- Call your elective representatives and ask that they support IPM and reject ineffective and unsafe strategies such as aerially application for mosquito control
- Support Rock the Earth so that we can continue to be vigilant in our fight for more restrictive pesticide use and to promote safer alternative practices like IPM.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION ON PESTICIDES?

Rock the Earth:	www.RockTheEarth.net	
EPA Office of Pesticide Programs:	www.epa.gov/pesticides	
Beyond Pesticides:	www.beyondpesticides.org	
Pesticide Action Network:	www.panna.org	
Center for Biological Diversity:	www.sw-center.org/swcbd	
The National Pesticide Information Center:	http://npic.orst.edu/	1-800-858-7378

In case of emergency, contact the Poison Control Center: **1-800-222-1222**