



REDUCING OUR RELIANCE ON PESTICIDES:

Victoria's Pesticide Use Reduction Bylaw

In January 2008, the City of Victoria became the first municipality in the Capital Region to adopt a bylaw to regulate pesticide use on public or residential property. Enforcement of Victoria's Pesticide Use Reduction Bylaw begins January 2009.

The City of Victoria is committed to working with the community to create and sustain healthy neighbourhoods. As a community, we need to reduce our reliance on the use of chemicals to beautify our lawns and gardens. The Pesticide Use Reduction Bylaw is a step in the right direction.

What is the Pesticide Use Reduction Bylaw?

The Pesticide Use Reduction Bylaw is in place to protect the natural environment by regulating and reducing the use of pesticides, specifically on lawns, trees, shrubs, and flowers, to beautify residential and public property.

The bylaw still allows pesticides to be used on hard landscaping surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks, curbs, and gutters, as well as on or inside buildings.

What is a pesticide?

Pesticide is the general term for any substance designed to eliminate undesired insects, weeds, rodents, fungi, bacteria and other organisms. Pesticides come in many forms and can be categorized as insecticides (for insects), herbicides (for weeds), and fungicides (for fungal diseases).

Why do we need this bylaw?

Pesticides can be long-lived. They often move from where they are applied – through the air, soil and water to our lakes, streams and ocean. Although an individual lawn or garden may seem quite small, the combined effect of pesticide use on many lawns and gardens can have a significant impact on a neighbourhood and the environment.

Who does the bylaw apply to?

The bylaw applies to all Victoria residents living in single family homes, townhouses, duplexes, apartment buildings, and condominiums, as well as landscape professionals and lawn care companies that do business within Victoria's boundaries.

What does the bylaw not apply to?

The bylaw does not apply to commercial, institutional or industrial properties. This includes mixed-use condominium/business developments.

As well, the bylaw does not apply to the management of pests that are designated as invasive species, and the application of pesticides: on residential areas of farms; on or inside buildings; on land used for agriculture, forestry or transportation; or on land used for pipelines or public utilities unless the pipeline or utility is City-owned.

How do I know if a product is a pesticide?

The best way to tell if a product is a pesticide is to check its label. Any product that has a Pest Control Product or PCP number near the list of ingredients is a pesticide. (See photo above)

Are there any pesticides that I can still use?

A list of reduced-risk, "permitted" pesticides which are regulated for use in British Columbia by the Provincial Government, is available on the City's website at www.victoria.ca/pesticide_reduction. A permit from the City of Victoria is not required to use these pesticide products.

Are there special circumstances when I can use a pesticide that is not on the Provincial list?

If pesticide alternatives have not worked or are not available, and the pest infestation threatens the integrity of sensitive ecosystems or poses a serious environmental or economic loss to an owner or occupier of land, a permit to use a pesticide may be issued by the City of Victoria.

What does the permit process involve?

Applying for a permit should be the last resort if alternate methods of pest management have failed. Permit applications are available on the City's website and at the City's Bylaw office. The application fee is \$25.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

City of Victoria, Bylaw Enforcement Office, 625 Pandora Avenue

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What should applicants expect?

Applicants will be asked if they have tried alternate methods to manage the infestation and City staff will conduct a site visit before a permit can be issued. The site inspection will also determine the number of notification signs required on a property when a pesticide is used. Refundable signs are available for \$5 each at the time of pick up of the permit from the Bylaw office.

Are there restrictions for permitted use?

The bylaw contains a number of restrictions for permitted use, such as distances of application from bus stops, school yards, parks, wells, lakes and streams.

Pesticides cannot be applied when wind exceeds 8 km/hr, in the rain or when rain is forecast, or when temperatures exceed 27 C. For a complete list of restrictions, see the bylaw at www.victoria.ca/pesticide_reduction

Does the bylaw allow me to use fertilizer on my lawn?

Some fertilizer products have a PCP number, whereas others don't. The key is to check the label before purchase and choose fertilizers that do not have a PCP number.

Can I use pesticide on my dandelions?

Residents or lawncare professionals who wish to use pesticide to remove dandelions from a lawn, must apply for a permit. An applicant will need to demonstrate that alternate methods have been tried and that the dandelions are an infestation that poses economic loss to the owner or occupier of the land if left untreated.

Can I still use pesticide on my vegetable garden?

Organic gardening is a healthy way to grow fruits and vegetables. If a pesticide must be applied, only those permitted products on the Provincial list can be used.

Does the bylaw apply to City-owned land?

The application of pesticide comes under the City's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, initiated in 1992, which minimizes the use of chemical pesticides on public land by maximizing the use of naturally occurring forces and non-toxic products.

The City of Victoria has reduced its pesticide use by 97% since the adoption of the IPM program. Pests are often a symptom of an imbalance in an ecosystem. An IPM program attempts to plan and manage ecosystems to prevent organisms from becoming pests.

Does the City use pesticide on public lands?

The City of Victoria does not apply pesticides for non-essential (cosmetic) use on public lands, which include boulevards, medians, parks, playing fields, play lots, picnic areas and playgrounds.

In the event of an infestation, City staff identifies the pest, evaluates the extent of the infestation with respect to its potential environmental and economic impact on the City's infrastructure, examines pest management opportunities and selects management options that will have the least impact on the environment.

In the event that a Pest Control Product (PCP) is required to manage an infestation, a pesticide would be used within the framework of the City's IPM Policy.

How is the City's bylaw enforced?

Although enforcement of the Pesticide Use Reduction Bylaw begins January 2009, Bylaw Officers will be focusing on education for the first three months, rather than issuing tickets. However, repeat offenders may be issued tickets during this grace period.

What are the consequences of not abiding to the bylaw?

Contravention of the bylaw or the conditions outlined in a pesticide permit, may result in fines ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 depending on the offence. The fine for spraying a pesticide for non-essential use on residential or public lawns, trees, shrubs and flowers is \$1,000.

What can I do if my neighbour is spraying a pesticide without a permit?

If you are concerned about the possible application of a pesticide for non-essential use in your neighbourhood, contact the City of Victoria Bylaw Office at 250.361.0215 or at bylawenforcement@victoria.ca

How can I safely dispose of pesticides and containers?

Pesticides are one example of household hazardous waste, which is any toxic product located within a home that poses a threat to public health and the environment when handled, stored and/or disposed of improperly. For information on how to properly dispose of unused pesticides and old pesticide containers, visit: www.crd.bc.ca/rte/pest

How can I have an attractive lawn and garden without using pesticides?

Pesticides and chemical fertilizers can be counter-productive in a healthy garden and lawn, damaging beneficial insects and ecosystems, and masking poor plant health.

There are ways to support, rather than suppress, a lawn and garden's biodiversity and increase the health of plants – naturally.

The best way to protect gardens from stubborn pests and weeds is to start with a good diversity of plants, grow them in the right place and inspect them regularly for pests and diseases.

Where can I find more information on gardening without pesticides?

There are a variety of local organizations that offer workshops and information on organic gardening practices.

City of Victoria

The City of Victoria will be offering a series of gardening workshops in the spring as part of its public education campaign. For more information on the bylaw and how to garden without pesticides, visit www.victoria.ca/pesticide_reduction

Capital Regional District

In March 2008, the Capital Regional District (CRD) launched a region-wide education campaign encouraging residents to Take the Pledge to go Pesticide-Free. For more information, contact the CRD Hotline at 250.360.3030, email hotline@crd.bc.ca or visit www.crd.bc.ca/takethepledge

Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre

The Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre is an excellent resource on organic gardening and offers a variety of workshops. Call 250.386.9676 or visit www.compost.bc.ca

Gaia College

Located in Victoria, Gaia College offers a range of organic gardening programs. www.gaiacollege.ca

SOUL – Society for Organic Urban Land Care

SOUL supports landscape professionals and communities in the transition to organic land care practices.

www.organiclandcare.org

DISCLAIMER: The information provided in this fact sheet is for summary purposes only. Please refer to the City's website for complete content of the City of Victoria Pesticide Use Reduction Bylaw at www.victoria.ca/pesticide_reduction