



Urban pesticides:  
Handy tools for  
protecting green  
spaces



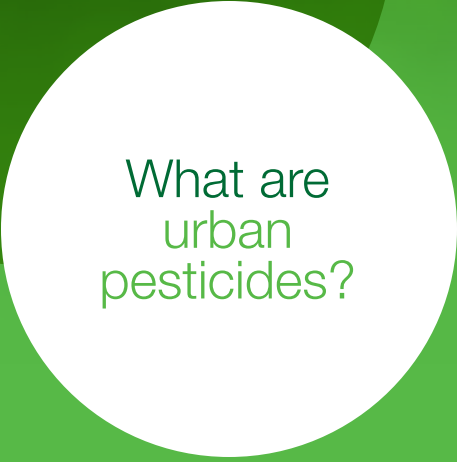
Urban pesticides  
benefit Canadians by  
helping to keep public  
and private green  
spaces thriving.



Green spaces like public parks and private yards can add to the beauty of urban landscapes, encourage biodiversity and contribute to happy, healthy communities where we live, work and play.

Green spaces require care to thrive because they can come under threat from insects, weeds, and diseases. One tool to help manage these pests and keep green spaces healthy is urban pesticides.





## What are urban pesticides?

Pesticides is an umbrella term that includes herbicides to manage weeds, fungicides to protect against disease and insecticides to control insects. Urban pesticides are products that can be safely used in your backyard, in public parks and other green spaces or on sports fields to manage harmful insects, weeds and diseases.

Pesticides are also used around your home to sanitize your swimming pool, to get rid of unwelcome pests, like ants or bed bugs, and as repellents to keep biting pests, like mosquitoes, at bay. Some are specially formulated for use by homeowners. Others are commercial-grade products designed for use by people with specialized training, like those at lawn care companies.

## Why do we need to use pesticides in urban settings?

Well-cared-for green spaces in urban areas help make cities beautiful, encourage biodiversity, and contribute to healthy communities. Whether it's your neighbourhood park, the soccer field or your own home or yard, pests can wreak havoc if they're not controlled.

Urban pesticides are used to help maintain public green spaces and sports fields so they can be enjoyed by Canadians. They play a key role in protecting lawns and urban landscapes when they are threatened by insects, weeds and diseases to maintain the healthy growth of grass and other plants in yards and gardens.

**Did you know?** When the summer heat hits, grass helps keep you cool. Street or sidewalk temperatures may reach 38 degrees Celsius or higher, but grass remains at 24 degrees Celsius.







**Did you know?** Weeds can spread fast. The seeds of one dandelion can spread and start another 200 seed-producing weeds.

## Are urban pesticides safe?

Pesticides are effective tools to manage pests and they can be used safely. Before any pesticide can be sold in Canada it must first be approved for use by Health Canada. Health Canada regulates all pesticides and conducts a scientific review and safety assessment to ensure they meet standards to protect human health and the environment if the product is used according to label directions. Canada's pesticide regulatory system is stringent, world-renowned, and ensures all pesticides that are used in Canada are safe for both people and the environment.



## What types of threats do green spaces face?

### WEEDS



If not kept under control, weeds can spread quickly and take over a lawn. Some types of weeds like crabgrass eventually die off above the ground but they leave bare spots and hard surfaces that can affect you and your children's enjoyment of backyards and sports fields. Other weeds like ragweed can cause allergic reactions, painful rashes and trigger asthma.

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### INSECTS



Lawn grubs can feed on the roots of a lawn and cause it to turn brown and die. The presence of grubs attracts animals like skunks and raccoons that will pull back the grass to feed on the grubs, causing further damage. Biting insects can carry disease like West Nile virus and Lyme disease and stinging insects can cause serious allergic reactions.

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### DISEASES



Diseases like rot, mildew, scab, blight and mold can affect not only lawns and ornamental plants but fruit and vegetable gardens as well. Snow mold is a cold-weather fungus that first shows up in the spring on your lawn and on golf courses after the snow melts looking like cobwebs on grass, and sometimes develops into straw-coloured circular patches. The air-borne spores produced can cause allergic reactions in humans and pets too.

# Five benefits of healthy green spaces



## **BOOST PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**

Going for walks, playing sports or just enjoying green spaces in parks or your backyard is a fun family activity.

It reduces stress, improves mood, and contributes to happier and healthier communities.



## **FILTER RAIN WATER**

A healthy lawn will slow runoff and act like a sponge.

This allows time for the water to seep back into the groundwater system rather than creating a flood by overwhelming community stormwater management systems.



## **AIR QUALITY**

A healthy lawn captures pollutants in the air and provides oxygen.

Fifteen square metres of grass produces enough oxygen for a family of four everyday.



**Did you know?** Healthy lawns help with floodwater control. A lawn the size of 900 square metres can absorb more than 22,000 litres of water.



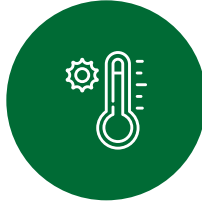




### ALLERGY REDUCTION

**A weed-free lawn diminishes pollens that contribute to allergies.**

Weeds like dandelions and ragweed are prolific allergens and can trigger unpleasant and uncontrollable allergies for up to 10 per cent of the population.



### CLIMATE

**Healthy plants and lawns reduce the warming effect of hard surfaces.**

Urban areas sprawling with buildings and concrete tend to be significantly warmer than areas with lush green spaces. When the summer heat hits, grass helps keep you cool.



## Tips for using pesticides in urban settings

### Did you know?

Don't use homemade pesticides. Health Canada strongly advises against Canadians making their own product because they have not been tested for safety.



### IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

- Monitor your yard and garden regularly for unexpected changes in how they look.
- If you notice an issue, identify the pest that is causing the problem. Ask an expert for advice if you are not sure.




### CHOOSE THE RIGHT PRODUCT

- Ensure you select the right pest control product for the problem you've identified and only buy what you need.
- Product labels are a great resource for determining the right product and amount.



### FOLLOW THE LABEL

- Product labels provide direction for how to use the product safely, how to store the product after use, and how to dispose of any leftover product.
- Read the label, follow the directions, and only use a product for what it is intended to do.
- Products should be stored in a safe place, protected from weather elements, pets and children.
- Follow the instructions for disposal of any leftover product and empty packaging.
- Despite Health Canada's rigorous approval process, some provinces and municipalities have chosen to enact laws that restrict pesticide use in their jurisdictions. These restrictions are not noted on the label. Check your local laws before using a product.

A man and a woman are riding bicycles in a grassy field. The man is on the left, wearing a light blue t-shirt and dark pants, riding a silver bicycle. The woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and green pants, riding a red bicycle. They are both looking towards each other. The background consists of a line of trees under a bright sky.

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