

Maine Board of Pesticides Control

**Miscellaneous Pesticides Articles  
December 2015**

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Article published Nov 25, 2015

## Meeting seeks alternatives to rail herbicide

By Gina Conn

STAFF WRITER

**MONTPELIER —** Long-term alternatives to the use of herbicides for clearing train tracks in Montpelier of problem vegetation were the topic of discussion at a recent meeting of the Vermont Pesticide Advisory Council.

Meeting at the Department of Fish and Wildlife offices Nov. 12 at the National Life complex, the council also announced that a new herbicide alert system will be operating next summer.

The meeting came on the heels of a well-attended gathering in June at Montpelier City Hall at which residents expressed outrage that the chemical herbicide glyphosate would be sprayed on the 2-mile stretch of track that runs through the city. The June meeting was organized by Mayor John Hollar.

Vermont Rail System, which did the spraying, says weeds can get stuck in the wheels of rail cars. The herbicide spraying has been done annually since 1999 with the exception of last year.

In July a compromise was reached with the city agreeing to pay for the rental of weed whackers and their use to clear a portion of the tracks in the heavily populated area between Main Street and Granite Street. The remainder of the 2-mile stretch was sprayed with the herbicide.

"It didn't cost very much," said City Manager William Fraser in an interview Tuesday, estimating the rental and labor bill was around \$3,000. To City Councilor Anne Watson, that was a price well worth paying.

"That was shockingly low," Watson said Tuesday about the cost. "That's pretty reasonable, and if it helps ease people's minds about it then it feels like money well spent to me."

Watson added, however, that there could be other options for the future, including cost sharing with the railroad.

According to Watson, weed whacking has been good for now but won't be sustainable for the long run.

"The weed whacking doesn't necessarily get up the roots," she said.

That's where the discussion of longer-term solutions picked up this month at the Vermont Pesticide Advisory Council meeting. Options discussed included applying vinegar and salt grind to the railway vegetation, having goats graze the area, and exploring safer chemicals to do the job.

"The city would like to find an arrangement where we will not have to pay anything," said Watson, who attended the meeting. In the short term, she added, "I think we would consider paying again if there was a plan where we can get off of that."

Gary Giguere, agrichemical management section chief for the state Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, was also present to hear the discussion and suggestions from the public. He said he is still open to hearing more suggestions for alternatives.

**"I'll take any idea anyone has at any time, until it's final," he said. "There's not a specific time period ... where we are closed to ideas."**

**He said the pesticide council will be getting information from both the city and the general public and will at some point make a recommendation.**

**"Ultimately because these meetings started at the request of the mayor, we'll go back to him with a final plan," Giguere said.**

**The pesticide council plans to schedule another meeting to continue the discussion.**

**With Watson noting that the railroad is required to notify the public when any herbicide spraying is planned, the council also announced that the Vermont Emergency Alert System will soon include herbicide spraying alerts, much as it transmits weather advisories and Amber Alerts. Residents will be able to sign up at [vtalert.gov](http://vtalert.gov) to receive notifications on planned sprayings.**

**The herbicide alert system is being developed now, according to Giguere, and will be in place for next year's spraying season.**

**"You'll be able to sign up to be alerted when the (herbicide spraying) permits get activated," he said.**

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ISIS Report 02/12/15

## Declaration of Physicians in Crop-sprayed Towns in Argentina at 3<sup>rd</sup> National Congress

*Faculty of Medicine, University of Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, 17 October 2015*

Original Publication: <http://www.reduas.com.ar/declaration-of-the-3rd-national-congress-of-physicians-in-the-crop-sprayed-towns/#more-1541>

**Sign the Independent Scientists Manifesto on Glyphosate here:**

[http://www.i-sis.org.uk/Independent\\_Scientists\\_Manifesto\\_on\\_Glyphosate.php](http://www.i-sis.org.uk/Independent_Scientists_Manifesto_on_Glyphosate.php)

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Five years after the first meeting at the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Córdoba, we - scientists, doctors and members of health teams from sprayed villages of Argentina -gathered in the Aula Magna of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), to verify that what we said then is emphatically true and getting worse by the day. The current system of agricultural production in the country pollutes the environment and our food, sickening and killing human populations in agricultural areas.

In the last 25 years, the consumption of pesticides increased by 983 % (from 38 to 370 million kilos), while the cultivated area increased by 50 % (from 20 million ha to 30 million ha). A production system based on the systematic application of agricultural poisons means, inevitably, that nature responds by adapting, forcing farmers to apply greater quantities of pesticides in the field to achieve the same objectives. Over the years a system has been created by and for sellers of pesticides, who every year increase their net sales (in 2015 the increase was 9%) while our patients, too, year after year are being exposed to this pesticide pollution more and more.

There is no doubt that the massive and growing exposure to pesticides changed the disease profile of Argentina's rural populations and that cancer is the leading cause of death among them (and the worst way to die).

Research presented at the congress show studies at different scales, which highlight a consistent pattern of toxicity. From small towns to larger populations at the provincial level (as in Chaco and Córdoba) or national level, different levels of exposure to glyphosate or

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agricultural poisons in general are compared, showing that reproductive health is affected by increases in spontaneous abortions and birth defects. Also increased are endocrine disorders such as hypothyroidism, neurological disorders or cognitive development problems and soaring of cancer rates - a tripling of incidence, prevalence and mortality - which are directly related to pesticide exposure. In parallel, data from studies in experimental models show that the genotoxicity of glyphosate and other pesticides is an underlying biological mechanism that explains its relationship with disease that doctors have found in our patients. Furthermore, genotoxicity has been verified in agricultural populations (adults and children) exposed to pesticides, while being absent in populations that are not fumigated.

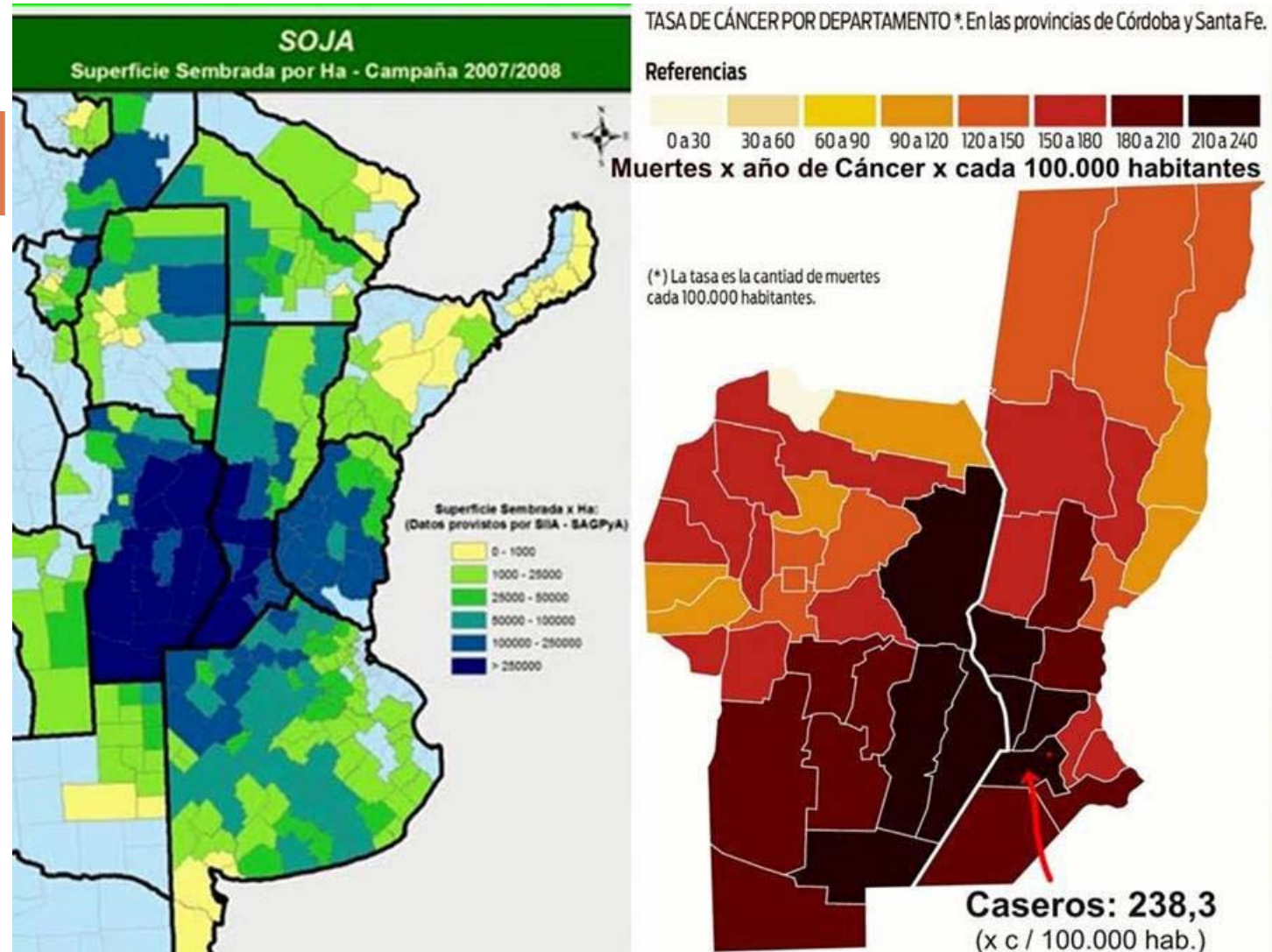
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Distribution of soya planted left and distribution of cancer mortality in Cordoba and Santa Fe, according Minagri and provincial Ministry of

### Health

During 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC WHO) recognized the human carcinogenicity of several pesticides, including glyphosate. This is the most widely used pesticide in the world and Argentina consumed 240 million kilos in the last year generating a potential average exposure of 6 kilos per person per year, the highest in the world. Glyphosate is bought and stored anywhere and is applied without any restriction over schools, neighbourhoods, streets and villages, subjecting people to indiscriminate and unnecessary exposure.

Environmental pollution with toxic chemicals and even carcinogens in food we bring to cities is increasing. For example, it was found that one serving of a common salad contains about 600 µg of agrochemicals; and now we know that even cotton swabs, gauze, panty liners and tampons marketed in our country contain glyphosate. There are no maximum residue limits for chemicals that are safe when they cause cancer, its absolute absence should be guaranteed.

The system of producing food in our society (field crops with poisons and industrial manufacturing) results in the destruction of native forests, land desertification, depletion and pollution of soil, water from streams and rivers, expulsion and eviction of indigenous populations, peasants and family farmers, exacerbates climate change and sprays hundreds of schools with children inside. It is strongly promulgated in the production and consumption of highly processed food including salt, sugar, fats and compounds such as soy lecithin, corn syrup, high fructose, dyes, flavourings and others that today international agencies state as responsible for chronic, non-communicable diseases as obesity, diabetes and Alzheimer's disease. These fill the supermarkets, offered in an eye-catching way geared especially to vulnerable populations and especially children, in violation of food safety.

All these elements in the field of public health are a warning to the toxic nature of agriculture in general and GM agriculture in particular, they have grown in our country as a result of the immense influence of large multinational pesticide companies like Monsanto, Bayer Syngenta, Dow, Dupont, etc., who are just looking to increase their sales regardless of the damage to environmental and public health from this system.



Our diagnosis of socio-environmental health is complemented by crucial immediate and long-term action. We demand the authorities of the national and provincial state recognize the requests made in previous Congresses and in the “Yes to Life No to Glyphosate Campaign” of the Federation of Health Professionals and the Andres Carrasco Collective.

To defend the human right to life, a healthy life and a healthy environment we demand:

1. Comprehensive ban on aerial spraying in the country with any kind of agrochemicals. The levels of pollution generated is unacceptable for the environment and human health.
2. Prohibition of all pesticides IARC-WHO recognized as human carcinogens grades 1, 2A and 2B, especially glyphosate. There is no need to justify the risk of generating cancer in people exposed environmentally or through contaminated food.
3. While the near total ban on glyphosate term is reached, it is urgent to get a reclassification to red tag (currently green label) and immediately prevent its free commercialization and application in and near populated areas and schools.
4. Prohibition of all “highly hazardous pesticides,” according to WHO and FAO, many are already banned in their countries of origin but are marketed in ours.
5. Ban on any spraying around 1 000 meters from villages and schools, the presence and movement of machines to spray (mosquitoes) in urban areas and the existence of deposits of pesticides within towns and neighbourhoods of cities.
6. Generating public policies that discourage the use of poisons in farming and food production, recognizing the toxic nature thereof. It is necessary to question the current model of agroindustrial and transgenic production, and instead look for systems that allow for social and cultural integration and defence and reproduction of ecological conditions of our environment. It is possible through state action to decrease the levels pesticide use in our country as demonstrated by experiences in other countries, to promote agro-ecology, local food consumption and defence of food security.

Government officials over the years have continued trying to hide the “side effects” of the agricultural production model, demonstrating its complicity and alignment with the interests of ethically questionable multinational companies. This situation led us to require the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organisation of American States in the request for an injunction to protect the right to health and life of the population environmentally exposed to pesticides, especially their children.

This is not only an Argentine problem, identical situations exist in other countries with similar results in Brazil, Uruguay, Central America, Paraguay, etc. Everywhere there is growing resistance to toxic agriculture and honest doctors and scientists support these struggles with their diagnoses and providing technical studies.

Struggles that seek to prioritize values such as health and the environment over economic and commercial interests of large biotech companies and sowing pools [a type of speculative investment fund for large-scale production of cereals in Argentina] in defence of human rights violated by heavily extractive productivist policies that destroy the environment into a collective health crisis.



Dr. Medardo Avila-Vazquez , Lic. Miryam Gorban; Presidents of National Congress Of Physicians of Crop -Sprayed Towns; Prof. Sergio Provenzano, Dean of Faculty of Medicine UBA

Translated by Dr Eva Sirinathsinghji

There are 3 comments on this article so far. [Add your comment](#)

[Helene Wilkie](#) Comment left 3rd December 2015 08:08:38

I would hope that those readers who may have been unsympathetic toward Hugo Chavez, for one reason or another, could now appreciate why he was totally against the importation and use of GMOs and their necessary chemicals. He was not to be fooled. Hats off to him.

[dhinds](#) Comment left 3rd December 2015 08:08:25

If Monsanto et. al is allowed to achieve their goals, the quality of life on this planet will plummet to unendurable levels and the legacy of homo sapiens will be the destruction of the biosphere and it's life support systems. Their goals can be achieved only if they are able to continue subverting governments and successfully manipulating public policy creation. This means that the current crop of corrupt politicians mas be defeated and environmentally and socially responsible legislators must take their place. This is what each and everyone of us must do in order to change the course of history, preserve the Earth for beneficial organisms and assure that life is worth living.

[Rory Short](#) Comment left 3rd December 2015 11:11:57

When a society lets profits have priority over everything else then that society inevitably self-destructs.

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**From:** [cleaneearth@tds.net](mailto:cleaneearth@tds.net) [mailto:cleaneearth@tds.net]

**Sent:** Thursday, December 03, 2015 1:49 PM

**To:** Jennings, Henry

**Subject:** homedepot-neonics

Henry – Please print this out for the Board, including my words here. Thank you.

The Board ought to ban neonicotinoids right now.....it's clearly immoral not to do so. Should have done this years ago; other countries have done so.

The Board needs to, each and every one, take PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY for their decisions to allow the poisoning of Maine's land, waters, and all life forms. It's all about money combined with a studied indifference to the harm they've wrought and continue to wreak on Maine's flora and fauna.

The Board needs to be replaced with non-users of pesticides, regular Maine people who care about our health and the health of Maine's woods, waters, wildlife, fisheries, humans, and all other life forms.

- Nancy Oden



## News releases

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### Home Depot to phase out bee-killing pesticides

Posted Dec. 3, 2015 / Posted by: Brian Salamanca

Coalition presses for all retailers to make commitment to protect bees

**WASHINGTON, D.C. — Home Depot (NYSE: HD)**, the world's largest home-improvement chain, has [announced](http://www.ecooptions.homedepot.com/healthy-home/organic-gardening/) that it has removed neonicotinoid pesticides, a leading driver of global bee declines, from 80 percent of its flowering plants and that it will complete its phase-out in plants by 2018. This announcement follows an ongoing campaign and [letter](http://webiva-downton.s3.amazonaws.com/877/89/8/6922/Home_Depot_follow-up_letter_Nov_2015_final.pdf) by Friends of the Earth and allies urging Home Depot to stop selling plants treated with neonicotinoids and remove neonic pesticides from store shelves.

"Home Depot's progress in removing neonics shows it is listening to consumer concerns and to the growing body of science telling us we need to move away from bee-toxic pesticides," said **Lisa Archer, Food and Technology program director** at [Friends of the Earth U.S.](http://www.foe.org/about-us) "However, we know that Home Depot and other retailers can do even more to address the bee crisis. Along with allies, we will continue to challenge retailers to engage in a race to the top to move bee-toxic pesticides off their shelves and out of garden plants as soon as possible. Bees are the canary in the coal mine for our food system and everyone, including the business community, must act quickly to protect them."

A study released by Friends of the Earth and Pesticide Research Institute, [Gardeners Beware 2014](http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2014-06-new-tests-find-bee-killing-pesticides-in-51-percent-of-bee-friendly-plants), showed that 51 percent of garden plants purchased at **Lowe's (NYSE: LOW)**, **Home Depot (NYSE: HD)** and **Walmart (NYSE: WMT)** in 18 cities in the United States and Canada contained neonicotinoid pesticides at levels that could harm or even kill bees. Following the release of this report, Home Depot announced it would require its suppliers to label all plants treated with neonicotinoid pesticides, which have been shown to harm and kill bees, by the fourth quarter of 2014. It also committed to "find alternative insecticides for protecting live goods and bees."

Friends of the Earth and allies have [called on](http://webiva-downton.s3.amazonaws.com/877/89/8/6922/Home_Depot_follow-up_letter_Nov_2015_final.pdf) Home Depot to strengthen its existing commitments to protecting bees and other pollinators and nursery workers by immediately disclosing the progress it has made to date in phasing out neonicotinoid pesticides in all of its plants and off-the-shelf products. The coalition also called on the retailer to make a public commitment to complete its phase-out of neonicotinoids in all plants and off-the-shelf products, while transitioning to least-toxic alternatives that are benign to human health and the environment, by December 2016.

"Home Depot's public commitment will better position the company to meet the demands of an increasingly environmentally-conscious consumer base. And, it sends an important market signal that restricting the use of bee-harming pesticides is essential to stemming chronic bee declines," said **Susan Baker, Vice President of Trillium Asset Management** and partners in the [Investor Environmental Health Network](http://www.trilliuminvest.com/), [Domini Social Investments](http://www.iehn.org/home.php) and [the Sustainability Group of](http://www.domini.com/why-domini/about-domini)

[Loring, Wolcott and Coolidge \(http://www.sustainabilitygroup.com/\)](http://www.sustainabilitygroup.com/), have been in active dialogue with management on this issue.

"Home Depot's progress in removing neonicotinoids from the majority of its flowering plants shows how fast a corporation can move when it needs to respond to consumer pressure and science," said **Beatrice Olivastrri, CEO, Friends of the Earth Canada** (<http://foecanada.org/en/about/>). "We expect all garden retailers, big and small, to be specifying right now to their suppliers to stop use of neonics for 2016 flowering plants."

"We welcome Home Depot's announcement that it has removed 80% of bee-killing pesticides from its plants. Together, over 750,000 SumOfUs members told Home Depot to stand up for the bees, and together we will be watching closely to make sure that Home Depot phases out these bee-killing pesticides as quickly as possible," said **Angus Wong, campaigner, SumOfUs** (<http://sumofus.org/>).

"It's important that retailers like Home Depot begin to make the switch towards safer products for bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. By phasing out neonicotinoid products, Home Depot is helping consumers break away from a dependency on the use of toxic pesticides in their homes and gardens," said **Jay Feldman, executive director, Beyond Pesticides** (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/>).

In the past year, [more than thirty nurseries \(http://www.foe.org/beeaction/retailers\)](http://www.foe.org/beeaction/retailers), landscaping companies and retailers have taken steps to eliminate bee-killing pesticides from their stores. A growing body of scientific evidence has continued to mount that neonicotinoids are a major contributor to both wild bee and honey bee declines and that they are [contaminating the environment \(http://toxics.usgs.gov/highlights/2015-08-18-national\\_neonics.html\)](http://toxics.usgs.gov/highlights/2015-08-18-national_neonics.html), [harming a variety of other organisms \(http://www.tfsp.info/worldwide-integrated-assessment/\)](http://www.tfsp.info/worldwide-integrated-assessment/) essential to healthy ecosystems and sustainable food production.

"Even though Home Depot has taken these steps in the right direction, it's important for gardeners to be aware that many plants in stores today still contain neonicotinoids. We look forward to the day when we can all buy home garden plants without worrying about harming pollinators. In the meantime, gardeners should choose organic and neonic-free starts, seeds and soil," said **Katherine Paul, associate director, Organic Consumers Association** (<https://www.organicconsumers.org/about-oca>).

"It's time for other retailers, such as Ace and True Value, to take a stand against toxic, bee-killing neonicotinoids by making a full-fledged, public commitment to eliminate bee-killing pesticides from store shelves," said **Laurel Hopwood, Sierra Club's** (<http://www.sierraclub.org/about?qclid=CJ7t8fy5u8kCFZBcfgodCQwOMw>) **pollinator protection program coordinator**.

Earlier in 2015, Friends of the Earth and Pesticide Research Institute surveyed nurseries and released the report [Growing Bee Friendly Garden Plants: Profiles in Innovation \(http://www.foe.org/news/archives/2015-05-new-report-highlights-strategies-to-move-garden-industry-in-bee-safe-direction\)](http://www.foe.org/news/archives/2015-05-new-report-highlights-strategies-to-move-garden-industry-in-bee-safe-direction), to find out how growers and retail stores were working to meet consumer demand for neonicotinoid-free plants.

"The survey showed that many growers are stepping up to the plate to ensure that their plants are safe for pollinators," said **Dr. Susan Kegley, principal scientist at Pesticide Research Institute** ([https://www.pesticideresearch.com/site/?page\\_id=504](https://www.pesticideresearch.com/site/?page_id=504)). "These growers are using innovative approaches to control pests such as application of beneficial insects or fungi that eat or disable pest insects, as well as tried and true common-sense pest prevention methods like proper sanitation, frequent monitoring for pests, and selection of pest-resistant plants. Their success shows that harmful systemic insecticides are not necessary to grow bee-friendly plants."

Greenhouse Grower magazine surveyed the one hundred largest greenhouse growers in the industry, and found 31 percent of the growers surveyed are not using neonicotinoids at all, and 38 percent have eliminated neonicotinoid use for some of their plant products.

Last April, the EPA placed a moratorium on new and expanded uses of neonicotinoids. In September, the 9th Circuit Court suspended the EPA's approval of sulfoxaflor, a neonicotinoid.

In November, the U.S. Geological Survey released a reconnaissance study demonstrating native bees collected in an agricultural landscape are exposed to multiple pesticides and of the bees tested, 70 percent contained pesticides, including neonicotinoids.

**\*Organizations partnering with Friends of the Earth U.S. in the campaign** (<http://www.foe.org/projects/food-and-technology/beeaction>)

**to urge garden retailers including Home Depot to phase out the use and sale of neonicotinoids**

**include:** American Bird Conservancy, Atlanta Audubon Society, Beyond Pesticides, Beyond Toxics, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Environmental Health, Center for Food Safety, CREDO Action, Ecology Center, Endangered Species Coalition, Environment New York, Environment Texas, Environmental Youth Council, Farmworker Association of Florida, Friends of the Earth Canada, Georgia Organics, GMO Inside, Green America, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Maryland Pesticide Network, Mercola.com, Natural Resources Defense Council, Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides, Olympia Beekeepers Association, Organic Consumers Association, Pesticide Action Network North America, Planet Rehab, Save our Environment, Sierra Club, Smart on Pesticides Maryland, SumOfUs, Toxics Action Center, Toxic Free North Carolina, Turner Environmental Law Clinic and The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

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