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July–August 2012**

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Commissioner

[- Land for Maine's Future](#)[- Conservation Registration Easement](#)

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Maine's Newest Natural-Based Resource Agency Official on Thursday

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to play important role in natural-based resource economy

From the Office of Governor Paul LePage

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, August 29, 2012

Contact: Adrienne Bennett (207) 287-2531

AUGUSTA – The State of Maine has a brand-new agency – one that will focus on the best use and development of the state's extensive land-based natural resources.

The new Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry becomes official on Thursday, Aug. 30, combining two departments into one that will support the people and economy of Maine while protecting its most valued assets.

The new department, which merges the departments of Agriculture and Conservation, is the result of legislation signed into law earlier this year by Governor Paul LePage, part of his vision to enhance the state's economic prosperity.

"The new ACF department is truly a department of Maine lands, which, for the first time, brings together agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, conservation, public access and an array of land-use planning assistance," Governor LePage said. "I expect this new department will accomplish great things and ensure that Maine's natural resources, which are such an important part of our heritage, will continue to play a leadership role in our future prosperity."

"Starting Thursday, Maine citizens who earn their livelihood from the land and those who enjoy Maine's outstanding land-based natural resources will be working with the newly configured Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry," said ACF Commissioner Walt Whitcomb. "There is much we can accomplish by working together."

"Time and time again, we heard from the very-involved interest groups across Maine that the quality of public service should be continued as employees work under a new, focused agency," Commissioner Whitcomb continued. "Our No. 1 mission is to provide the highest level of public service."

Department staff members have been preparing for the merger since the legislation's adoption. As part of that effort, Ed Meadows, who served as conservation commissioner in Maine from 1988 to 1995, has returned from Michigan to assume the position of deputy commissioner for the new department.

Seeking public input on the merger has been a priority in advance of the law's effective date. Three well-attended stakeholder meetings were held in Augusta, Orono and Caribou to garner comments and recommendations for the department consolidation. Written comments have been received from agriculture, conservation and recreation constituencies which have been valuable to the Administration in shaping the new department.

The new department will have 732 full-time and seasonal employees and have a budget of \$96.5 million. It will be organized into seven divisions:

- Division of Agricultural Resource Development;
- Division of Forestry;
- Division of Parks and Public Lands;
- Division of Quality Assurance and Regulations;
- Division of Animal and Plant Health;
- Division of Geology and Natural Areas; and
- Division of Land Use Planning, Permitting and Compliance.

All professional and technical boards and organizations associated with both departments will continue to work in conjunction with the new department.

Department staff may be reached at the following telephone number: (207) 287-3200.

For the department's website, go to: <http://www.maine.gov/acf>

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The authorization for the merger of the departments of Agriculture and Conservation comes from [Public Law 2011, chapter 657, parts V, W and Y \(.pdf\)](#)

**The law takes effect on
Thursday, August 30,
2012.**



» News » Maine Headline News

Maine Sees Rise in Tick Disease

08/10/2012 10:30 AM ET

State health officials have received 38 reports to date this year of a tick-borne bacterial infection known as anaplasmosis.

BANGOR, Maine (AP) _ Maine is seeing a rise in cases of a tick-borne disease known as anaplasmosis.

The **Bangor Daily News** reports that 38 cases of the bacterial infection have been reported to state health officials so far this year. Twenty-six cases were reported in all of 2011.

Anaplasmosis can cause body aches, fever and headache. Symptoms typically appear within two weeks of a tick bite. The disease is carried by the same kind of tick as the better-known Lyme disease.

State epidemiologist Stephen Sears says most cases of anaplasmosis appear in the late summer and fall.

Health officials say people can avoid ticks by using repellent and wearing long sleeves, pants and socks when in wooded or grassy areas. People should check themselves for ticks after hikes or other outdoor activities.



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Yesterday at 9:23 PM

Lebanon spraying against West Nile

As a precaution, officials decide to spray pesticides at the edges of two elementary school properties in RSU 60.

By [North Cairnncairn@pressherald.com](mailto:North.Cairnncairn@pressherald.com)
Staff Writer

LEBANON — While state officials await test results from two suspected cases of mosquito-borne viruses in humans, a school district in York County has sprayed pesticides at elementary school properties to protect students.



[click image to enlarge](#)

This photo provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control shows a female *Aedes albopictus* mosquito feeding on a human host. Lebanon, Maine will spray near elementary schools to try to combat West Nile virus.

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Responding to a report in mid-August that West Nile virus had been identified in a mosquito sample in Lebanon, school officials there decided to "be on the side of caution" and authorized spraying of the edges of the two elementary school properties, said Jim Ashe, interim superintendent.

The spraying Wednesday morning was a "proactive" measure to protect children as young as 6 through middle-schoolers, who will return to school Sept. 6.

The spraying covered a swath about 4 to 5 feet wide on the perimeter of the grounds of the town's two elementary schools, Hanson and Lebanon, which are separated by a 100-foot-wide thicket of woods with a brook -- prime mosquito habitat.

Neither the playgrounds nor the buildings were sprayed, Ashe said, but officials felt margin spraying would create a wall of repellent that could serve as a buffer from insects.

The state Center for Disease Control and Prevention was still waiting late Monday for the results of tests on two suspected cases of mosquito-borne disease. One, being tested for West Nile virus, is believed to have been contracted in another state, CDC officials have said. The other case is a suspected eastern

equine encephalitis infection.

State epidemiologist Stephen Sears said he expects no word until late this week from the federal laboratory that's doing the tests.

With the start of school, more children will be out early in the morning, and student athletes will be practicing or playing games in the late afternoon and evening. Dawn and dusk are mosquito-heavy times of the day, so school and health officials feel some extra attention and protection is wise.

"It's fairly prudent to do something," said Jim Dill, a pest management specialist with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. "Protection is the best thing."

Applying pesticides, he said, is "kind of a last resort," particularly now in Maine, because no cases of mosquito-borne disease have been confirmed in humans, but "it's better to be safe than sorry."

Dill called the spraying in Lebanon "due diligence" on school officials' part. "If you save one person, it's worth it."

"We're always going to be a little more proactive" when the public health issue concerns young children, said Ashe. "We were just trying to be protective."

The pesticide was applied by two truck sprayers dragging hoses a few hundred feet long, said Kevin Moore, facilities manager for the school district, Regional School Unit 60.

Ashe did not rule out additional spraying. Pesticides have not been used at any other school properties in the district, which covers Lebanon, North Berwick and Berwick.

Everything depends on whether the virus turns up in humans or appears to be spreading further, Ashe said. He said the district would take its lead from the local health department.

Another consideration for school officials who decided to spray was the community's use of school playgrounds and fields, Moore said.

One of Maine's confirmed cases of West Nile virus in a mosquito was detected in Gorham. Several calls to Gorham school officials weren't returned Monday, so it wasn't known whether they are considering using pesticide.

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August 25

Maine communities mull how to combat West Nile virus

As other states use aggressive pesticide spraying programs to quell the virus, southern Maine officials consider it a last resort.

As neighboring states turn to pesticide spraying programs to fight West Nile virus and eastern equine encephalitis, officials in Portland and other communities in southern Maine are weighing how to respond if it turns out that the viruses have spread to humans.

So far, only mosquitoes have been infected in Maine, according to reports for the state Center for Disease Control.

But concern is growing as the diseases make their way across Massachusetts and New Hampshire and those states turn to aggressive pesticide spraying programs to quell the viruses.

For now, Portland is concentrating on "information gathering," spokeswoman Nicole Clegg said Friday, as the state awaited word on two suspected human cases – one of West Nile and the other EEE – being tested by a federal laboratory of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We are nowhere near spraying," Clegg said. "Very informal ... internal discussions" about how the city might respond are just beginning, and the city is looking to state health officials for an indication of the potential for human illness and guidance on how to protect residents.

"We have not had any discussions about spraying for West Nile," said Marcel Blouin, director of parks and recreation in Sanford, near Lebanon in York County, where the West Nile virus was found in a mosquito from a monitoring pool last week. He said residents were "not panicking," and that the general attitude was "to take a little more time to weigh and discuss" what to do.

As for widespread pesticide spraying, Blouin said, "That's the last thing I'd suggest."

The CDC did not return phone calls seeking its position on whether pesticide spraying should be conducted.

At this point, Clegg said, "the public education piece is huge." She underscored that Maine's Center for Disease Control urges people to take care to avoid being bitten by infected mosquitoes, which can transmit the diseases to humans, as well as birds, horses and other mammals.

There has never been a confirmed human case of West Nile or EEE in Maine, although both Massachusetts and New Hampshire recently reported cases of the viruses, and Massachusetts has used widespread pesticide spraying. New Hampshire public health officials this week recommended spraying in communities bordering the Bay State.

So far, spraying has been limited in Maine.

One licensed private pesticide application company, Atlantic Pest Solutions of Arundel, said Friday that it had responded to several requests from individual home owners to have properties sprayed, but no comprehensive spraying program has been adopted by entire communities.

"There's been more activity in regard to individual households wanting yards done," said biologist Sherrie Juris, mosquito and tick director for Atlantic Pest.

A number of entomologists and consumer watchdogs rejected the idea of widespread spraying.

"No, is that clear enough?" asked Charlene Donahue, president of the Maine Entomological Society in Augusta, when asked if municipalities should spray. Maine has not experienced that great a risk, she said, and the decision to use pesticides is more complicated than people realize, because the sprays also kill beneficial insects, such as bees.

Donahue suggested following the recommendations of the state CDC, which advocates that residents try to remain indoors during hours when mosquitoes are most active, from dusk till dawn. If people choose to go out, they are advised to wear long-sleeve shirts and long pants and apply insect repellent.

Juris, the pest company biologist, who serves as a monitor at some of the state's mosquito surveillance sites, agreed that such methods are prudent. "Have a heightened awareness," she advised. "Keep doors closed, use screens on windows and doors and wear loose clothing" to make it more difficult for mosquitoes to penetrate.

If you decide to use a pesticide, she said, always read the label. "Make sure the pest you want (to affect) is on the label" and follow the directions carefully. If you opt for hiring a professional, take care to use only a knowledgeable, licensed professional. In instances where children live on the property or are in the area, call a pediatrician for advice.

Don't panic or go overboard treating a problem that has not yet surfaced, she said.

On the other hand, she added, "we don't want people to get a false sense of security. I mean, I don't see a hard frost (which would kill mosquitoes) in the near future."

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Yesterday at 11:58 PM

[Woman who visited Maine had West Nile virus](#)

By [North Cairncairn@pressherald.com](mailto:NorthCairncairn@pressherald.com)

Staff Writer

Maine's first case of West Nile virus in a human has been confirmed by federal health officials, but the person who had the disease did not contract it here, the state's epidemiologist said Tuesday.

Dr. Stephen Sears said the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention diagnosed West Nile virus in a Pennsylvania woman who visited Maine but was not here during the incubation period for the virus, estimated at two days to two weeks.

As a result, the positive test was recorded as a Pennsylvania case. There have been no reports of humans contracting the virus in Maine.

State health officials got the positive test results Tuesday. The Pennsylvania woman was treated earlier this month at an emergency room in Lincoln County.

Test results from a patient in Maine who was suspected of having eastern equine encephalitis were negative, according to federal lab results.

"We thought (the West Nile case) would be positive," said Sears. He said that, because the virus was contracted elsewhere, the test result "really doesn't tell us anything" about the situation in Maine.

Infected mosquitoes transmit both West Nile virus and eastern equine encephalitis, so the diseases remain public health concerns through mid-October or after the first few hard frosts.

Some birds -- including songbirds and crows -- can carry the viruses, spreading them further into the mosquito population and, in turn, to other birds and to mammals, including humans.

A mosquito surveillance pool in York County tested positive for West Nile virus in mid-August. It was the first confirmed finding in the state.

West Nile virus has been found in humans in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and Sears said health officials anticipate it will be detected in Maine.

He said the message from the case confirmed Tuesday "should actually be consistent with information already provided" by the state: Be aware, but not afraid, of the disease -- and certainly not panic-stricken by its appearance in Maine.

State officials have encouraged residents and visitors to heed longstanding suggestions for minimizing exposure to mosquitoes, Sears said. That includes staying indoors between dusk and dawn, wearing loose long-sleeved shirts and full-length pants, and using mosquito repellent if you

must be outdoors after dark, when mosquitoes are most active.

Widespread pesticide spraying has been done in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. In Maine, one school district has used pesticide -- a minimal-risk botanical blend -- around two elementary schools.

Edges of the school properties in Lebanon were sprayed a week ago, the district verified through the pesticide application firm Atlantic Pest Solutions of Arundel.

School officials decided not to use synthetic pesticides because they felt the botanical blend -- essentria IC3 -- offered enough protection and reduced toxicity to students and other residents who might use the grounds for athletic events or recreation.

Essentria IC3 is a combination of rosemary and peppermint oils and geraniol (a derivative of geraniums) as active ingredients and wintergreen and white mineral oils, vanillin and polyglyceryl oleate (an emulsifier).

The botanical pesticide, which is not as powerful as synthetic chemical blends, has a residual toxicity of two to four weeks. It is "non-selective," meaning it does not target a specific species and will kill insects besides mosquitoes, including bees, ants, crickets, cockroaches, fleas, ticks and spiders.

School officials "felt that it was a middle-of-the-road (choice), and they wanted to do something," said Ted St. Amand, owner of Atlantic Pest Solutions.

Because it has an oily base, it should stick to the undersides of leaves and crooks of tree branches, where adult mosquitoes are likely to be during the day, when spraying is done.

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Yesterday at 11:01 PM

West Nile virus found in Standish

By [North Cairnncairn@pressherald.com](mailto:North.Cairnncairn@pressherald.com)
Staff Writer

West Nile virus has been found in a mosquito sample from Standish.



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In this Aug. 16, 2012 file photo, mosquitos are sorted at the Dallas County mosquito lab in Dallas. West Nile virus has been found in a mosquito sample from the southern Maine town of Standish. (AP Photo/LM Otero, File)

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The monitoring pool in which the disease was detected is a few miles northwest of Gorham, where the virus was pinpointed and confirmed eight days ago.

The virus, transmitted by infected mosquitoes, was discovered in a surveillance pool in a densely wooded area between Route 35 and the northeast edge of Sebago Lake, said Standish Town Manager Gordon Billington.

He was informed of the finding Thursday by the state Center for Disease Control and Prevention, which posted a notification on its website.

The exact location of the infected mosquito sample was not disclosed by state officials, who continue to monitor for the virus throughout Maine.

It is south of Saint Joseph's College, Billington said, and the area has light residential development. He said he expects more infected mosquitoes will be detected in the Sebago Lake region.

Billington said there has been no discussion of using pesticides in Standish to control the mosquito

population, and he doesn't expect any.

There has been considerable debate among school officials, parents, activists and pesticide applicators about the use and efficacy of pesticide poisons to control West Nile virus, which has not spread to humans in Maine.

West Nile virus was found earlier in August at a mosquito-surveillance site in Lebanon, on the New Hampshire border in York County. School officials in the town of about 4,000 residents ordered preventive spraying of a botanical pesticide on the edges of two elementary school properties.

The disease has been detected and spread to humans in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and pesticides have been more widely used in communities in those states. The total number of cases of West Nile virus has exceeded 40 nationwide, most in Texas and other Southern states.

West Nile virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. It can cause illness in birds, humans and other mammals. Although the disease can be fatal, many people who are infected show no symptoms and might never know they were infected, say officials for the state CDC.

Symptoms of the virus include headache, high fever, altered mental state, tremors, convulsions and, rarely, paralysis. It can also cause meningitis, an inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord, or encephalitis, which involves irritation and swelling of the brain.

There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus, so state and town health officials have urged residents to do all they can to avoid exposure to mosquitoes.

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Posted: August 30
Updated: Today at 7:36 AM

How Maine's mosquito squad is tracking advance of West Nile

Sherrie Juris is on the front line of a small army of people collecting and counting mosquitoes as part of Maine's disease surveillance program.

By [North Cairnncairn@pressherald.com](mailto:North.Cairnncairn@pressherald.com)
Staff Writer

Schoolchildren call her "the tick lady."



[click image to enlarge](#)

Sherrie Juris, a biologist with Atlantic Pest Solutions, explains how a gravid trap that she had just set up lures egg-bearing female mosquitoes with "stinky water," then traps them.

John Ewing / Staff Photographer

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But Sherrie Juris, a biologist, does much more than teach about ticks and mosquitoes and how to be protected from the infections they carry -- Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses, West Nile virus and eastern equine encephalitis.

She's on the front line of a small army of people that the state of Maine has assigned to gather information on specific diseases where they often appear first: in mosquitoes.

In summer, Juris spends much of her time collecting and counting mosquitoes as part of Maine's disease surveillance program. With six monitors and 26 stations statewide, the program tracks insect populations to determine whether and where West Nile virus or eastern equine encephalitis has surfaced.

"People don't realize the legwork" that's involved in testing insects for infections that can be transmitted to humans, she said.

Juris and other trained site monitors practice a form of science that seems mostly low-tech and very labor-intensive for the critical job of informing the public about the spread of infectious diseases. It's good science, even if it's a little reminiscent of early human medicine or 8th-grade science projects.

Juris, for example, uses equipment that includes everything from women's nylon knee-high stockings to contraptions that call to mind Rube Goldberg inventions, designed from blackened liquor boxes (camouflage), plastic dish tubs (mimicking vernal pools), fishing tackle or tool boxes, PVC pipe, battery-operated mini-fans and covers of giant potato chip cans.

These traps and bait stations are relatively inexpensive essentials that do a reliable job in a crucial task -- monitoring mosquitoes for a range of infectious diseases.

Juris keeps track of 40 mosquito traps at five sites in York County. Whether it's in blistering heat, squalls of rain or balmy breezes, she heads out once a week into the field -- more precisely, the forest -- to set up traps and bait some of them with "stinky water," a repugnant blend of rotting straw and standing water.

"You don't want to spill this in your car," she said.

The traps operate for one day and one night, in most cases at least 15 to 24 hours, attracting and snaring mosquitoes and other insects. The next morning, Juris returns, collects the mosquitoes and returns to a modest lab in a small cottage in Arundel. She uses a microscope, tweezers and intense concentration to count and identify every single mosquito and separate the whole take into specific genus and species.

"When you look for a while" through the microscope lens, she said, "your eyes get kind of boggly."

Juris isn't counting dead bugs. The various traps for mosquito-monitoring harvest live mosquitoes, which are kept in chilled coolers and then transferred to Petri dishes on dry ice. The cold keeps the mosquitoes sleepy.

The state is interested now in testing only six species of mosquitoes, those in which diseases have been found. Juris, who works for Atlantic Pest Solutions in Arundel, a state contractor in the program, records the number, genus and species of the mosquitoes she captures.

Afterward, the insects, dead, are driven to Maine Medical Center in Portland. Once again, the numbers are confirmed and documented, then the insects, frozen and packed in dry ice to preserve their DNA, are shipped off by courier to the health and environmental testing lab in Augusta.

Maine Medical Center is a kind of "bug hub" in the surveillance work: Mosquitoes from all over the state are delivered to the lab there, arriving in test tubes, called pools, containing from one to 50 mosquitoes.

The samples come from the 26 stations -- some with several traps -- around York, Cumberland, Waldo, Kennebec and Aroostook counties, said Chuck Lubelczyk, a field biologist who supervises the Maine Medical Center portion of the work.

"We like to think of ourselves as flying-on-our-feet scientists," said Lubelczyk. Describing a small vacuum that sucks mosquitoes into a trap, he said it "involved a lot of tinkering (and) was a long time in the making."

"It's a fun science," he said -- a good thing, since the tests detect some sobering illnesses. To make it all work, he said, "we are regular shoppers at hardware stores."

When the mosquitoes reach their destination in Augusta, they are "ground up, mashed together" before DNA testing is done for specific human and animal diseases, said Sara Robinson, an epidemiologist with the infectious-disease division of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

If any test turns up positive for, say, West Nile virus or EEE, it is repeated to double-check the finding, she said. Only when it is re-confirmed is it deemed a clearly positive result and reported to local authorities.

Once local authorities have been contacted, a public announcement can be issued -- the end of an intricate, if unromantic, chain of detective work.

"It's not a glamorous job ... but I love this," Juris said as she vacuumed out a black box during a routine check at the margin of a forested area.

"Yeah, mosquitoes excite me," she said. "There's a lot of information that we get from them. They don't have a voice, but they can speak volumes."

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CDC: West Nile Outbreak Could Be Largest Ever

By [Alex Johnston](#) On August 22, 2012 @ 9:02 pm In [National News](#) | [No Comments](#)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control said that the West Nile outbreak is one of the largest in U.S. history, with more than 1,100 reported cases and 41 deaths.

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Lyle Peterson, who heads the CDC's vector-borne infectious diseases department, told CBS News that it is "one of the largest West Nile outbreaks ever seen." He added that his agency does not "really know why it's worse this year than in previous years."

He said West Nile was found on birds or mosquitoes in 47 states. Vermont, Hawaii, and Alaska were the only three to not have instances of the disease.

The metropolitan Dallas area was hit particularly hard during this year's outbreak, officials said, according to the publication. There are around 340 cases of West Nile in Dallas and nearby Tarrant counties.

"I see the numbers often, and it's a surprise to see this happening in the northern part of Texas," said Dr. Victor Cardenas with the University of Texas School of Public Health, according to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

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August 29

[CDC: West Nile cases rise 40% in 1 week](#)

So far this year, 1,590 cases of the mosquito-borne disease have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and 66 deaths.

Marilnn Marchione / The Associated Press

West Nile virus cases are up 40 percent since last week and may rival the record years of 2002 and 2003, federal health officials said Wednesday.



Derek Johnson, left, environmental unit supervisor, and Jeff Everett, right, an environmental technician from Oklahoma City's Storm Water Quality division of Public Works, lower a video camera into a storm drain in Oklahoma City recently to look for evidence of mosquitoes,

AP

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So far this year, 1,590 cases of the mosquito-borne disease have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and 66 deaths.

About half of the cases are serious illnesses, and the CDC considers those the best indicator of West Nile activity because many mild cases do not get reported and their symptoms may not even be recognized.

Typical symptoms are fever, headache and body aches, and most people get better on their own in a few days. Less than 1 percent develops neurological symptoms such as stiff necks and even coma and paralysis.

Based on reports of West Nile so far this year, "we think the numbers may come close" to those of 2002 and 2003, when nearly 3,000 severe illnesses and more than 260 deaths occurred each year, said the CDC's top expert on the disease, Dr. Lyle Petersen.

Health officials think that West Nile activity will peak in mid-to-late August, but likely will continue through October. Because symptoms can take two weeks to appear, reporting cases lags behind when people became infected.

The disease first appeared in the United States in 1999. Officials say this year's early spring and hot summer may have contributed to the current boom in cases. Mosquitoes get the virus from feeding on infected birds and then spread the virus to people they bite.

All states except Alaska and Hawaii have found West Nile virus in people, birds or mosquitoes this year. Texas has been the hardest hit, accounting for half of the cases reported to the CDC so far.

"I'm not convinced that we have peaked. We may have plateaued," said Dr. David Lakey, commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The CDC also says it does not expect Hurricane Isaac to have much of an impact on cases in Southern states. Heavy storms can wash out mosquito breeding grounds, although standing water can aid breeding, Petersen said. Many other factors, such as the population of infected birds, influence the severity of West Nile outbreaks, he said.

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Published: Tuesday, August 28, 2012

Litchfield to spray pesticide to control mosquitoes in wake of West Nile virus threat

By *ERIN PLACE Staff Writer*

LITCHFIELD – On the heels of Gov. John Lynch declaring a public health threat over West Nile virus, Litchfield has decided to spray pesticide, possibly as early as Tuesday morning.

On Friday, Lynch heeded the advice of the state's Department of Health and Human Services and issued the public health threat for the mosquito-borne illness for Greater Manchester and Nashua, which included a total of 44 communities.

At the Board of Selectmen's meeting Monday night, members unanimously threw their support behind West Nile barrier spraying, even though there have been no positive pools of mosquitoes found carrying the virus within the town to date.

"It's good to be cautious; we've done it in the past," said selectmen's Chairman John Brunelle. "I think it's good protection to start with."

Selectmen's Vice Chairman George Lambert pointed out that there is a lag between when mosquitoes are tested for the virus and when a positive result comes back. He noted that West Nile has been found in neighboring communities and could pop up in Litchfield next.

There will be no extra cost to the town for the spraying, which will be executed through the town's mosquito control plan. Municipal Pest Management of Kittery, Maine, will conduct the spraying.

According to Mosquito Control District Chairman John Poulos, the spraying will target only the treeline; it will not affect the ground or areas in and around the district's schools where students might come in contact with the chemicals used to knock down the insects. Poulos said the spraying could occur as early as Tuesday morning, if the rain holds off. If it does rain, the spraying will be postponed until Wednesday.

Litchfield School Board Chairman John York was in the audience and told selectmen that Superintendent Brian Cochrane was ready to utilize the district's automated alert system to inform families of the spraying. York noted that the new school year doesn't start until next week and the only outdoor activities occurring on school grounds are a few sports practices and not whole classes of students playing during recess.

"Now's a great time to get it done if we're going to do it," York said.

In his letter to Lynch, DHHS Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas informed the governor that as of Thursday, 36 mosquito batches had tested positive for West Nile virus throughout the state. Manchester had 29 positive batches and Nashua had three. Last week was also the first confirmed human case of West Nile virus in the state since 2010, Toumpas said. The adult has recovered after being infected, according to the DHHS website.

For more information on West Nile virus and how to prevent it, visit www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/arboviral/index.htm.

EEE findings prompt towns' spraying

By David Rattigan

Globe Correspondent / August 16, 2012

Mosquito control experts were taking an aggressive approach to preventing the potential spread of Eastern equine encephalitis and West Nile virus this week, with spraying in several communities.

Late last week, there were positive reports for EEE in mosquito pools in Reading and Topsfield. In response, there was spraying this week in both communities, plus some nearby towns.

There also were recent findings of West Nile.

In the positive findings reported last week, mosquitoes carrying the virus were located in Chelmsford, Dracut, Methuen, Peabody, and Revere. Chelmsford, Peabody, and Dracut were sprayed Monday night.

Public health officials are warning residents to protect themselves by wearing mosquito repellent with DEET; wearing long sleeves and pants; and being mindful of outdoor activity at the peak mosquito hours of dusk and dawn.

To discourage West Nile, it is also advising residents to clear any container or other repository of standing water, often a breeding area for the type of mosquito that carries the virus.

In results reported from the state's Department of Public Health lab, a pool of mammal-biting mosquitoes from Reading collected on Aug. 1 tested positive for EEE, which is often fatal.

The lab also reported a positive sample from a pool of bird-biting mosquitoes collected on Aug. 7 in Topsfield.

In Reading, the spraying was scheduled for Monday and Tuesday evening, and outdoor activities were canceled both nights.

The human-biting mosquitoes infected with EEE are the first this season that have been found beyond Cape Cod and Southeastern Massachusetts.

In Topsfield, Pye Brook Park — where the sample was taken — was sprayed on Monday night, and a targeted spraying of nearby streets in the town's northern quadrant was scheduled for Wednesday.

"The state considers Topsfield low-risk, but there is a risk nonetheless, so we ordered the preemptive targeted spraying," said the Board of Health agent, John Coulon.

The Northeast Mass. Mosquito Control & Wetlands Management District also did barrier spraying of schools and athletic fields in neighboring Boxford on Monday, and the Board of Health canceled activities at those sites for two days to let the pesticides dissipate.

The Boxford Board of Health chairwoman, Louise Kress, said that her board was following a protocol it created a month ago, in response to concerns in the southern part of the state, where EEE was showing up in mammal-biting mosquitoes in large numbers.

The bird-biting mosquitoes such as those found in Topsfield also will sometimes feed on humans.

The East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project also has scheduled targeted spraying for North Reading on Thursday, as well as scheduling spraying in Burlington, which has had a higher-than-average mosquito population.

Although both EEE and West Nile virus are potentially fatal to humans, EEE is considered the more dangerous of the two, although it is also more difficult to catch.

"EEE is life-altering," Kress said. "It can lead to severe crippling and death."

A man in his 60s from the Metrowest region is believed to have caught the disease while traveling in the mid-Atlantic region.

Jack Card, director for the Northeast Mass. Mosquito Control & Wetlands Management District, said that several communities in the district were considering targeted spraying, including those with West Nile findings, and those bordering the EEE-positive samples in Topsfield and Reading.

“We’re having conversations with a lot of towns right now,” he said, “and we’re also awaiting the results of our data collection this week, which will come on Friday.”

Mosquito control experts cite the warm winter and abnormally hot summer as two reasons for the increased numbers of mosquitoes carrying the two viruses, said David Henley, superintendent for the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project.

“And we’ve still got six weeks to go in the mosquito season.”

David Rattigan can be reached at DRattigan.Globe@gmail.com.

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We can keep going.

Dallas County Declares State of Emergency, Requests Planes for Aerial Pesticide Spraying

By Anna Merlan

Published Fri., Aug. 10 2012 at 5:47 PM

Dallas County escalated its war on mosquitoes today, with County Judge Clay Jenkins declaring a state of emergency and requesting that five planes be made available from the Texas Department of Emergency Management in order to begin spraying pesticide aerially over North Dallas and the Park Cities. The outbreak of West Nile virus this summer has killed nine people.

In a news conference this afternoon, Jenkins and Texas Department of Health Services Commissioner Dr. David Lakey called aerial spraying "totally safe." Individual cities will still be able to elect whether or not to spray within their boundaries, with the decision being subject to a vote by each City Council. For now, Dallas County doesn't plan to spray in any unincorporated areas.

Jenkins said county officials had spent the afternoon meeting with representatives from the state Health and Human Services division and the Dallas County Medical Society, as well as corresponding by phone with the CDC's "chief of mosquito-related diseases." Together, he said, they'd decided that the outbreak warrants aerial spraying to the affected cities, which include Highland Park, University Park and North Dallas where it's bounded by the tollway, 635 and Interstate 30.

"The recommendation of the top official in the United States of America tells us that [aerial spraying] is far more uniform," Jenkins said, "and is as safe or safer, and has a better chance of eradicating this disease that's claimed lives in Dallas County already." (However, as our own Jim Schutze has pointed out repeatedly, the chemical cocktail used is [controversial](#), with dueling studies as to its safety and efficacy.)

Jenkins said that on Monday, the county will also begin a three-day intensive ground spray of the "hardest-hit areas." The planes aren't expected to be available until late next week.

Someone asked what Jenkins would do if cities "resisted" being sprayed.



Judge Clay Jenkins, backed by Commissioner John Wiley Price and Dallas County Health and Human Services Director Zach Thompson.

"I believe in democracy," Jenkins responded, but added that it was his "lay opinion" that aerial spraying was the best option. "We will do everything in our power to protect the people of Dallas County from this epidemic."

Jenkins said the spraying will take place at night; both he and Lakey encouraged common-sense precautions, including keeping people and animals out of the spray. They also recommended wearing insect repellent and protective clothing, as well as limiting outdoor activity during dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.

"I firmly believe that aerial spraying is safe," Lakey said. He said that he didn't believe that the spray would affect other wildlife, including bees, butterflies and ladybugs. Nonetheless, he said, "I understand the inherent apprehension a lot of folks have when chemicals are released by airplanes."

The three-day spraying by trucks "may be enough of a resource" to address the issue of West Nile, he said, but added that Dallas County "can't wait" to request planes. He noted that West Nile has an incubation period of two to 14 days, meaning that even if spraying began today, there could still be potential new cases in two weeks.

"I think this is a public health emergency here in Dallas County," Lakey said.

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Dallas-Fort Worth Brace for West Nile Spraying

The Texas cities have been hit hard by the potentially fatal mosquito-borne disease

August 13, 2012



By Amanda Gardner

HealthDay Reporter

MONDAY, Aug. 13 (HealthDay News) -- The Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area -- the epicenter of the nation's worst outbreak of West Nile virus in the United States this year -- could see aerial spraying of insecticides as early as Monday night to help control the potentially deadly mosquito-borne disease.

Dallas County has counted 120 cases so far while Texas overall has seen 351 cases, putting it "on track to be the worst year ever for West Nile virus," said Christine Mann, a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

With nine deaths reported so far, Dallas County officials on Friday declared an emergency. The north Texas region has reported 12 deaths.

On Monday, the county gave the go-ahead for aerial spraying of insecticide for the first time in 50 years, although local communities will have to approve the move before spraying begins, according to published reports.

Louisiana and Mississippi have also been hit hard by West Nile virus. Louisiana health officials have reported a total of 68 cases and six deaths, while authorities in Mississippi have reported 59 cases and one death.

The United States is experiencing the biggest spike in West Nile virus since 2004, health officials reported.

Dr. Marc Fischer, a medical epidemiologist with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Arboviral Diseases Branch in Fort Collins, Colo., said a "seasonal outbreak occurs every year but so far this year the activity seems to be greater and a little earlier than in recent years."

It's difficult to pinpoint why virus activity is higher this year and why it is higher in certain regions.

"That's impacted by a number of factors, environmental factors like weather, heat, precipitation, the birds that are around to amplify the virus and maintain it, the mosquitoes that spread the virus, and human behavior," he said.

Eighty percent of people who are infected with West Nile virus develop no or few symptoms, while 20 percent develop mild symptoms such as headache, joint pain, fever, skin rash and swollen lymph glands, Fischer said.

Less than 1 percent will develop neurological illnesses such as encephalitis or meningitis. People at greater risk for serious illness are those who are older than 50 and who have certain underlying medical conditions such as cancer, diabetes or high blood pressure, the CDC said.

Severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, loss of vision, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, according to the CDC.

In more extreme cases, the virus can lead to serious neurologic illness, such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues), or death. People older than 50 and those with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease and organ transplants, are at greater risk for serious illness, according to the CDC.

Fischer said that "children can certainly be infected with West Nile virus but are less likely to get serious neurological illness."

There are no specific treatments for West Nile virus, which was first identified in the United States in 1999.

The greatest risk for infection with West Nile virus typically occurs from June through September, with cases peaking in mid-August. But changes in the weather, the number of infected mosquitoes and human behavior can all influence when and where outbreaks occur, the CDC said.

Although most people with mild cases of West Nile virus will recover on their own, the CDC recommends that anyone who develops

symptoms should see their doctor right away.

The best way to protect yourself from West Nile virus is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes, which can pick up the disease from infected birds. The CDC recommends the following steps to protect yourself:

- Use insect repellents when outside.
- Wear long sleeves and pants from dawn to dusk.
- Don't leave standing water outside in open containers, such as flowerpots, buckets and kiddie pools.
- Install or repair windows and door screens.
- Use air conditioning when possible.

More information

The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more information on [West Nile virus](#).

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West Nile Virus



Latest West Nile Virus News



County-By-County Map



Spraying And Health Information

NORTH TEXAS (CBSDFW.COM) – Ground and aerial pesticides are expected to help kill off mosquitoes carrying the dreaded West Nile Virus. But, the pesticides could also affect another important insect, one that's vital to our food supply.

If you eat, you can thank a honeybee.

"In order for us to have food, we must have pollinators," Brandon Pollard said.

One third of honey bee colonies in North America began mysteriously disappearing two years ago. In North Texas, honeybees face a new threat.

The same pesticides that kill mosquitoes carrying the West Nile Virus can kill honeybees.

"We already know we've lost thousands," Pollard said.

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Brandon and Susan Pollard are founders of The Texas Honeybee Guild. The Pollards say they have already lost one colony in the Junius Heights District when ground spraying started in the area a couple of weeks ago.

The Pollards took video of their dying colony and posted it on their Facebook page.

“Writhing on the ground. And, they really do look like they’ve been put through a neurotoxin. It’s not a pretty sight,” Susan Pollard said.

The Pollards think the spray may have fallen on some of the honeybees, or some of the bees drank pesticide tainted water and brought it back to the rest of the colony.

“They will share their food and within 24 or 48 hours, 80-percent of those bees have shared that and they will be gone like the ones that we have witnessed,” said Susan Pollard.

The Pollards have begun covering their colonies with large, cardboard boxes to protect them from nightly ground or aerial pesticide sprays. They have to uncover them every morning to cool them off and allow them to go for a drink of water.

The Pollards admit it is too early to tell what ground and aerial pesticides will do to the North Texas Honeybee. But the Pollards call honeybees an “indicator species.”

“An indicator species is like the canary in the Coal mine,” Susan Pollard said.

“This would be like if the red light on your car was not going off when it needed to go off to tell you, you know, something’s wrong here,” she added.

The Pollards warn if we lose the honeybees, we could also lose food production or even insects that could help protect the environment.

“We don’t want to be messing with Texas or our ecosystem in Texas,” Susan Pollard said.

While the Pollards could lose their workforce, they are stopping short of calling it a potential catastrophe.

“The catastrophe to me would be that we think this is the way to approach the future when we want to be green, progressive, and



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draw people to come and live in this city," Susan Pollard said.

But, the Pollards are already thinking of next year, hoping local leaders take early action to rid areas that of mosquito breeding grounds without having to resort to pesticides.

Clarke, the company that manufactures the aerial spray called "Duet," said there are many reasons for a "colony collapse." But it admits the aerial spray could be toxic to honeybees. However, the company says it tries to minimize the impact on "non target species" by using a less concentrated formula than the ground spray and by spraying late at night when honeybees are in their hives.

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Spraying for West Nile Moves to Manhattan

By [Zachary Stieber](#) On August 28, 2012 @ 11:04 pm In [New York City](#) | [No Comments](#)



Contra Costa County Mosquito and Vector Control District technician David Wexler carries a container of BVA Larvacide Oil before spraying a catch basin with standing water and mosquito larvae on June 29, 2012 in Pleasant Hill, California. (Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

NEW YORK—For only the third time in a decade, the city’s Department of Health will shift its spraying of pesticides into Manhattan. The action is aimed at killing mosquitoes and preventing West Nile virus and the rarer, but deadlier, eastern equine encephalitis (EEE).

The spraying, slated for Friday, Aug. 31, will take place between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m., weather permitting. A low concentration of synthetic pesticide Anvil will be sprayed over parts of Central Park, Clinton, Lincoln Square, the Upper West Side, and Manhattan Valley.

This will be the first time any area in Manhattan has been sprayed, apart from Washington Heights, which was sprayed in 2003 and 2007, according to city records. Spraying in the other four boroughs is common, such as the scheduled sprays in Queens and the Bronx Tuesday evening.

The borders of the Manhattan spray area will be West 97th Street to the north, West End Avenue to the west, West 58th Street to the south, and West Drive in Central Park to the east.

Eight West Nile Virus cases in NYC

The number of reported human cases of West Nile virus in the city has reached eight, with no deaths, while eight other cases and two deaths have been reported statewide, according to spokespersons from the city and state departments of health.

West Nile virus, which reached the United States in 1999 in New York, is typically less harmful than EEE and doesn't cause symptoms in every one who contracts it. But the virus was responsible for both deaths in New York state this year. On Saturday, an elderly resident of Nassau County, over the age of 80, died. Youth and the elderly are most in danger of dying from the disease.

Health and pesticides

Some groups and elected officials, such as Assemblyman William Colton and Beyond Pesticides, have expressed concern about using pesticides to combat mosquitoes in terms of human health and mosquitoes becoming resistant to the sprays.

New York's Department of Health states on its website that low levels of Anvil, a pesticide, in low concentrations are not likely to incur "adverse health effects ... but some individuals may experience health effects."

The health department suggests staying in doors for at least 30 minutes after spraying, closing all doors and windows, and turning off air conditioning units. Inhaling significant amounts of the pesticide can harm the

nervous system, and a high level of exposure to the petrol solvent the pesticide is diluted in can cause irritation to the eyes, skin, and respiratory system.

Related Articles

- [CDC: West Nile Outbreak Could Be Largest Ever](#)

New Yorkers who wish to avoid mosquito bites should consider limiting time outdoors between dawn and dusk; wearing loose, light, long-sleeved clothing when outside; and clearing their property of any standing water, according to recommendations from the government and experts in the sector.

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Schlein, Paul B

From: Pamela St. Peter <pamela.stpeter@maine.edu>
Sent: Friday, August 24, 2012 2:39 PM
To: David T. Handley
Subject: Spotted Wing Drosophila Update - August 24, 2012

This announcement is posted on the Highmoor Farm website at <http://umaine.edu/highmoor/blog/2012/08/16/spotted-wing-drosophila-update-for-maine-fruit-growers-july-23-2012/>, where you can subscribe to weekly updates.

Spotted Wing Drosophila Update for Maine Fruit Growers - August 24, 2012

Over the last week and a half, spotted wing drosophila numbers in our traps have increased significantly. We are now finding both male and female flies in the highest numbers of the season. In addition, we have found drosophila maggots infesting both highbush blueberry and raspberry fruit this week and have been getting reports from growers around the state of infested fruit. Some farms have closed berry sales for the season as harvest is coming to an end, and the few fruit remaining will not be worth the extra effort of repeated insecticide sprays to rescue them. For those with late fruit crops still to harvest, protection will now be necessary to prevent infestation by spotted wing drosophila. Up to this point weekly applications of an allowed insecticide have been adequate, but reports from the field suggest that more frequent applications will now be necessary to keep fruit free from maggots. Growers in southern states have found that a three to five-day spray schedule was needed to prevent infestation.

Maine Crisis Exemption Label for Gowan Malathion 8 Flowable® to Control Spotted Wing Drosophila on Blueberries: There are just a few more days left to utilize the Section 18 Crisis Exemption granted by the EPA for the use of Gowan Malathion 8 Flowable® at a higher rate than the federal label allows, to provide better control of spotted wing drosophila on blueberries. This label will allow a rate of 2.0 to 2.5 pt/acre per application, with a maximum of two applications per field. This exemption rate can only be used from August 13 through August 28 this year. Growers must have a copy of the exemption label in their possession to use this rate, and must fill out a use survey at the end of the season. Exemption Labels are available through pesticide dealers, and the Board of Pesticides Control (287-7544).

Check product labels for which crops are registered for the product, application limits, rates, post-harvest intervals and safety precautions. Keeping the fields clean of over-ripe and rotten fruit can also help reduce the incidence of this insect.

We have available a very good series of new fact sheets from Penn State Extension regarding spotted wing drosophila. If you would like copies please e-mail Pam St. Peter at pamela.stpeter@maine.edu, or call Pam at 933-2100.

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IPM Web Pages:

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WINDSOR, Maine (NEWS CENTER) -- Fair season is in full swing, with thousands of people reconnecting with their agricultural roots while enjoying plenty of food and fun, but with all the celebration comes a word of warning from public health officials that may sound more like your mother than an urgent health announcement.

"What has been occurring around the country, and especially in the midwest...people associated with fairs with exposure to pigs, they have gotten an influenza illness and when it has been tested, it turns out that it is this swine variant," explained State Epidemiologist Dr. Stephen Sears.

"The concern we have is what is going to happen? Is it going to spread more? Do we need to be concerned about it, or is this just a small little outbreak that is occurring only around these fairs and is it something that is just going to go away?"

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Girl, 10, charged with manslaughter in baby's death



Girl, 10, charged with manslaughter in baby's death

"Everybody should not be afraid about going to fairs," added Dr. Sears. "The messages we give are the same thing we would do if you were going any place there are animals and there is food and there is potential for exposure, number one is wash your hands before you have contact with animals. Wash your hands afterwards. Don't go directly from the animals to the food, because you can get other diseases."

At the Windsor Fair, hand washing stations have been a staple of their livestock barns and display areas for years.

"There was an incident of E. Coli that occurred in New York several years ago at a fairgrounds, and I think ever since then we have kind of ratched it up and it has made us more aware of something that might happen," explained fair president, Tom Foster.

Foster says he can't recall a single issue at the fair in the forty-plus years he has been helping organize the event. He says members of the Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs meet every year with public health officials to discuss potential problems.

"If there is an animal that we don't feel is quite right, it is removed from the fairgrounds," said Foster.

"If you have been sick within the past 7 days, you shouldn't attend or go in around the animals," he added. "The animals are all healthy, they are checked on a daily basis by staff from the Department of Agriculture."

As of August 24th, the Centers for Disease Control had 277 confirmed cases of the H3N2v influenza in 11 states so far this year. While there have been no cases reported in Maine so far this year, two were reported in the state last year.

Dr. Sears says the majority of people affected by the illness have been children under 5 years of age.

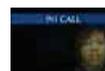
"This does not appear to have human to human transmission, or if it does it is very small," said Dr. Sears. "And that is really the difference between H1N1 virus that we remember. That was really highly transmissible person to person and so we saw schools with large numbers of infections. We saw it spread around the world in a very short period of time. Right now, this virus, this influenza, appears to only be occurring if you are exposed to pigs."

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Related Links

- Maine Center for Disease Control Website
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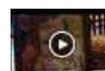
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State Sponsors Free Pesticides Disposal for Maine Homeowners, Family Farms

August 10, 2012

Agriculture

AUGUSTA—Maine's Board of Pesticides Control (BPC), the Maine Department of Agriculture, and Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), are partnering to provide homeowners a free opportunity this fall to dispose of old pesticides that may be stockpiled on their properties.

Required registration—the deadline for which is Sept. 28—is now open for the disposal day, which gives owners of homes and family farms and greenhouses the opportunity to safely and legally get rid of pesticides that have become caked, frozen, or otherwise unusable, including those that are banned in the state.

It's not uncommon for new owners of older homes or farms in Maine to discover they have inherited hazardous waste in the form of pesticides, with old chemicals such as DDT, lead arsenate, 2,4,5-T and chlordane left behind in barns, basements or garages.

While disposing of these chemicals can seem daunting, it's important for the protection of public, wildlife and environmental health that they are dealt with properly and not tossed in the trash or down the drain where they can contaminate land and water resources, including drinking water.

"We urge people holding these chemicals to contact us immediately to register," said BPC Public Education Specialist Paul Schlein. "There will be four sites throughout the state where pre-registered participants will be able to bring their obsolete pesticides and dispose of them conveniently and at no cost."

The collected chemicals go to out-of-state disposal facilities licensed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency where they are incinerated or reprocessed.

Due to safety and regulatory requirements, disposal "drop-ins" are not allowed, so registration by the Sept. 28 deadline is necessary. The BPC will contact registrants several weeks prior to that drive to inform them of their local collection date and location.

To register, get additional details or learn important information about the temporary storage and transportation of obsolete pesticides, go to <http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org> or call Henry Jennings, Maine Board of Pesticides Control, director, at 207-287-2731.

Through their jointly sponsored disposal events—which are funded entirely through pesticide product registration fees—BPC and DEP have kept about 90 tons of pesticides out of the waste stream since 1982.

- For more information about the Maine Department of Agriculture, go to: <http://www.maine.gov/agriculture>
- For more information about the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, go to: <http://www.maine.gov/dep>

Contact: Henry Jennings, 207-287-2731, henry.jennings@maine.gov

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State offering free pesticides disposal to homeowners, family farms

By Rick Levasseur, BDN Staff

Posted Aug. 10, 2012, at 3:49 p.m.

AUGUSTA, Maine — Several state agencies are partnering to provide homeowners a free opportunity this fall to dispose of old pesticides that may be stockpiled on their properties.

Required registration — the deadline for which is Sept. 28 — is now open for the disposal day, which gives owners of homes, family farms and greenhouses the opportunity to safely and legally get rid of pesticides that have become caked, frozen or otherwise unusable, including those that are banned in the state.

The partnering agencies are Maine's Board of Pesticide Control, Department of Agriculture, Department of Environmental Protection.

It's not uncommon for new owners of older homes or farms in Maine to discover they have inherited hazardous waste in the form of pesticides, with old chemicals such as DDT, lead arsenate, 2,4,5-T and chlordane left behind in barns, basements or garages.

While disposing of these chemicals can seem daunting, it's important for the protection of public, wildlife and environmental health that they are dealt with properly and not tossed in the trash or down the drain where they can contaminate land and water resources, including drinking water, according to a joint press release from the agencies.

"We urge people holding these chemicals to contact us immediately to register," said BPC Public Education Specialist Paul Schlein. "There will be four sites throughout the state where pre-registered participants will be able to bring their obsolete pesticides and dispose of them conveniently and at no cost."

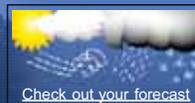
The collected chemicals go to out-of-state disposal facilities licensed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency where they are incinerated or reprocessed.

Due to safety and regulatory requirements, disposal "drop-ins" are not allowed, so registration by the Sept. 28 deadline is necessary. The BPC will contact registrants several weeks prior to that drive to inform them of their local collection date and location.

To register, get additional details or learn important information about the temporary storage and transportation of obsolete pesticides, go to thinkfirstspraylast.org or call Henry Jennings, Maine Board of Pesticides Control executive director, at 287-2731.

Through their jointly sponsored disposal events — which are funded entirely through pesticide product registration fees — BPC and DEP have kept about 90 tons of pesticides out of the waste stream since 1982.

<http://bangordailynews.com/2012/08/10/news/state/state-offering-free-pesticides-disposal-to-homeowners-family-farms/> printed on August 31, 2012



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Maine offering free pesticide disposal day

Sunday, August 19, 2012

AUGUSTA— Maine's Board of Pesticide Control (BPC), with the Maine Department of Agriculture, and Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are partnering to provide homeowners a free opportunity this fall to dispose of old pesticides that may be stockpiled on their properties.

Required registration — the deadline for which is Sept. 28 — is now open for the disposal day, which gives owners of homes and family farms and greenhouses the opportunity to safely and legally get rid of pesticides that have become caked, frozen, or otherwise unusable, including those that are banned in the state.

It's not uncommon for new owners of older homes or farms in Maine to discover they have inherited hazardous waste in the form of pesticides, with old chemicals such as DDT, lead arsenate, 2,4,5-T and chlordane left behind in barns, basements or garages.

While disposing of these chemicals can seem daunting, it's important for the protection of public, wildlife and environmental health that they are dealt with properly and not tossed in the trash or down the drain where they can contaminate land and water resources, including drinking water.

"We urge people holding these chemicals to contact us immediately to register," said BPC Public Education Specialist Paul Schlein. "There will be four sites throughout the state where pre-registered participants will be able to bring their obsolete pesticides and dispose of them conveniently and at no cost."

The collected chemicals go to out-of-state disposal facilities licensed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency where they are incinerated or reprocessed.

Due to safety and regulatory requirements, disposal "drop-ins" are not allowed, so registration by the Sept. 28 deadline is necessary. The BPC will contact registrants several weeks prior to that drive to inform them of their local collection date and location.

To register, get additional details or learn important information about the temporary storage and transportation of obsolete pesticides, go to <http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org> or call Henry Jennings, Maine Board of Pesticides Control, executive director, at 287-2731.

Through their jointly sponsored disposal events — which are funded entirely through pesticide product registration fees — BPC and DEP have kept about 90 tons of pesticides out of the waste stream since 1982.

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Valley home and farm owners can take pare in pesticide round up

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EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE: ST. JOHN VALLEY - Maine's Board of Pesticide Control, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Environmental Protection are partnering to provide St. John Valley homeowners an opportunity to dispose of old pesticides that may be stockpiled on their properties at no cost.

The collection will take place in October. To avoid any unregistered or unannounced pesticide drop-offs, the day, time, and locations are not announced in advance, according to Paul Schlein, public education specialist for the Maine Board of Pesticides Control.

Once registered, he said in an email, St. John Valley participants will be provided with the date, time, location, packing and transportation instructions. Preregistration also gives the Board the chance to review all the materials coming in, and also allows the disposal company handling the collection to know in advance exactly what they will be getting, to have the proper packing materials.

Preregistration is required by Sept. 28 and is now open for the disposal day, which gives owners of homes and family farms and greenhouses the opportunity to safely and legally get rid of pesticides that have become caked, frozen, or otherwise unusable, including those that are banned in the state. Due to safety and regulatory requirements, disposal "drop-ins" are not allowed, so registration by the Sept. 28 deadline is necessary. The BPC will contact local registrants several weeks prior to that drive to inform them of their local collection date and location.

It's not uncommon for new owners of older homes or farms in Maine to discover they have inherited hazardous pesticides, such as DDT, lead arsenate, 2,4,5-T and chlordane left behind in barns, basements or garages, according to the BPC. It is important for the protection of public, wildlife and environmental health that these hazardous wastes are dealt with properly and not tossed in the trash or down the drain where they can contaminate land and water resources, including drinking water. Once collected, the chemicals go to out-of-state disposal facilities licensed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency where they are incinerated or reprocessed.

All arrangements are handled through the Board's office, with details at www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/public/obsolete.htm. To register, get additional details or learn important information about the temporary storage and transportation of obsolete pesticides, go to www.thinkfirstspraylast.org or call Henry Jennings, Maine Board of Pesticides Control, executive director, at 287-2731.

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Recycling Committee announces free pesticide, TV recycling opportunities

The [Recycling Committee](#) has announced several opportunities for free recycling of hazardous and other wastes:



Obsolete Pesticide Disposal The Maine's Board of Pesticides Control, the Maine Department of Agriculture, and Maine Department of Environmental Protection are partnering to provide homeowners and family farmers a free opportunity this fall to dispose of old pesticides. Registration is required by Sept. 28 to take advantage of the free disposal day. Registrants will be notified of the local collection date and location. | [More information](#)



Free TV Recycling at ecomaine open house Sept. 22. Ecomaine, the regional waste-management company co-owned by the Town of Cape Elizabeth and 20 other southern Maine municipalities, will offer free TV recycling at their annual open house scheduled for Sept. 22, 2012 at ecomaine, 64 Blueberry Road in Portland. Disposal of TVs at the Cape Elizabeth Recycling Center is normally \$5-\$15. | [More information](#) will be forthcoming,



Free Recycling Unit Lending. Ecomaine is also offering a free recycling unit lending service for events hosted by non-profit organizations. Ecomaine has 100 units and bags available for loan, and they may be reserved by contacting [Shelley Dunn](#) at ecomaine. | [More information](#)

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State to Collect Old Pesticides This Fall

Homeowners, greenhouse owners and farmers will be able to safely and legally get rid of old pesticides like DDT and chlordane for free this fall, thanks to a program sponsored by the Maine Board of Pesticide Control and the Maine Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Protection. Advanced registration is required.

It's not uncommon for new owners of older homes or farms to discover they have inherited hazardous waste in the form of pesticides, including toxic chemicals such as DDT, lead arsenate, 2,4,5-T and chlordane, that have been left behind in barns, basements or garages. Old pesticides, when disposed of improperly, can contaminate soil and ground water, including drinking water, thus creating human health and environmental hazards.

Free disposal programs have kept about 90 tons of pesticides out of the Maine waste stream since 1982. The collected chemicals go to out-of-state disposal facilities, licensed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, where they are incinerated or reprocessed.

Under environmental regulations, casual drop-offs of pesticides are not allowed, so those wishing to dispose old pesticides must register with the Maine Board of Pesticide Control to participate. The board will contact registrants several weeks prior to the disposal drive to inform them of their local collection date and location. The deadline for registration is September 28.

To register and get information about the temporary storage and transportation of obsolete pesticides, go to www.thinkfirstspraylast.org or call Henry Jennings, Maine Board of Pesticides Control executive director, at 287-2731.



Lexi Hartford, Grade 6, Nobleboro Central School, Nobleboro

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State offers free pesticides disposal

[Maine](#) | Friday, August 10, 2012 at 6:00 pm

AUGUSTA — The state is providing homeowners with a free opportunity this fall to dispose of old pesticides that may be stockpiled on their properties.

Required registration — the deadline for which is Sept. 28 — is now open, and gives owners of homes and family farms and greenhouses the opportunity to safely and legally get rid of pesticides that have become caked, frozen or otherwise unusable, including those that are banned in the state.

It's not uncommon for new owners of older homes or farms in Maine to discover they have inherited hazardous waste in the form of pesticides, with old chemicals such as DDT, lead arsenate, 2,4,5-T and chlordane left behind in barns, basements or garages.

In a statement released by the agencies overseeing the event, officials said it's critical for the protection of Maine residents, wildlife and environment that pesticides and similar chemicals "be dealt with properly and not tossed in the trash or down the drain where they can contaminate land and water resources, including drinking water."

There will be four sites throughout the state where pre-registered participants will be able to bring their obsolete pesticides and dispose of them at no cost.

The collected chemicals will go to out-of-state disposal facilities licensed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency where they will be incinerated or reprocessed.

Due to safety and regulatory requirements, disposal "drop-ins" are not allowed, so registration by the Sept. 28 deadline is necessary. Registrants will be contacted several weeks prior to the drive to inform them of their collection date and location.

To register, get additional details or learn important information about the temporary storage and transportation of obsolete pesticides, go to <http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org> or call Henry Jennings, executive director of the Maine Board of Pesticides Control, at 287-2731.

Through jointly sponsored disposal events — which are funded entirely through pesticide product registration fees — the state's Board of Pesticide

Control and the Department of Environmental Protection have kept about 90 tons of pesticides out of the waste stream since 1982, according to the statement.

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Posted: 8/7/12

Updated: 10:06 AM

[State to investigate weedkiller use at Messalonskee Lake](#)

By [Matt Hongoltz-HetlingMHongoltzHetling@mainetoday.com](mailto:MHongoltzHetling@mainetoday.com)

Reporter

OAKLAND — The state's pesticides control board is expected to launch an investigation today into the spraying of a weedkiller on a dam on Messalonskee Lake.

Ed Pearl, a former director of Friends of Messalonskee Lake, said that he was driving past the dam on the north end of the lake Friday afternoon when he saw a man spraying a liquid in a blue tank sprayer on weeds growing out of the dam's boards.

"I'd say more was probably going in the water than was going on the weeds," Pearl said.

Pearl said that the man appeared to be working on behalf of the company that owned the dam, and he had keys to a fence and outbuilding on the dam.

The dam is owned by Essex Hydro Associates, of Boston, according to records at the town office.

Two calls to Essex Hydro Associates were not returned Monday.

Pearl said he reported the incident to the Oakland Police Department and to the Maine Board of Pesticides Control.

The danger to humans was unclear, but the waterway is important to the area as a recreational area and contains fish that residents eat, Pearl said.

"There are a fair amount of trout in that area. There are people that kayak in it. There are people that swim in it. It goes into the Kennebec River."

Ray Connors, of the state's Pesticides Control Board, said Pearl's complaint triggers an investigation by the state, during which Pearl, the person who applied the substance and the dam owner probably would be interviewed.

"Complaints are a priority," Connors said. "Whenever possible, the BPC tries to respond to complaints the same day they are received."

Connors said the board's inspector was taking care of another case Monday, when the complaint was made, but probably would initiate his investigation today.

In addition, the site could be tested for physical evidence of the substance sprayed.

"The determination of whether or not to sample will be based in large part on the information obtained through the follow-up inspection process," Connors said.

The investigation and resolution process usually is completed within a year, Connors said, although more involved cases can take several years.

8/8/12

Messalonskee Stream Hydro under investigation for pesticide use

By [Matt Hongoltz-HetlingMHongoltzHetling@mainetoday.com](mailto:MHongoltzHetling@mainetoday.com)
Reporter

OAKLAND -- The company that owns the dam on Messalonskee Lake is working with the state's pesticide control board to determine whether the recent application of a weedkiller was in compliance with the law.

Ray Connors of the Maine Board of Pesticides Control said that the investigation started Tuesday, and could include testing of the site.

Dick Norman, of Messalonskee Stream Hydro, which owns the dam, said on Tuesday, "At this point, if there is an issue that comes up like this, you indicate what's happened and let them take a look."

On Friday, resident Ed Pearl saw a man spraying weedkiller on plants growing in boards used to impound water on the north end of the lake. He filed a complaint with the Maine Board of Pesticides Control on Monday, triggering the investigation.

Norman, who also said he contacted the board Monday after an employee told him about the spraying, wouldn't discuss the details while the investigation was ongoing. He added that the company follows state and federal laws regarding pesticide use.

"We are a very heavily regulated industry, and we abide by the laws," Norman said.

Messalonskee Stream Hydro, an affiliate of Essex Hydro Associates, of Boston, owns three projects in the Kennebec River system, and the Benton Falls dam on the Sebasticook River.

Norman said that the company has been a leader in promoting environmental practices, and pointed to innovative designs that allow fish to migrate over the dams as an example.

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Lawns to Lobsters aims to protect York rivers, ocean

By **Susan Morse**

smorse@seacoastonline.com

August 18, 2012 2:00 AM

YORK, Maine — Red lobsters are sprouting up on area lawns.

Those who have the 6-inch by 6-inch Lawns to Lobsters signs on their properties have also taken the pledge to curb pesticide use in an effort to protect area rivers and the ocean.

"All water runs to the ocean," Leslie Hinz said.

Hinz is an assistant code enforcement officer, administrative assistant and local plumbing inspector who serves on the Lawns to Lobsters Committee.

On Thursday, the committee sent out more than 400 letters to residents living along the Cape Neddick and York rivers, asking them to voluntarily adopt best management practices for lawn care, including tips on landscaping and ways to minimize fertilizer application.

Those who agree to take the Lawns to Lobsters pledge get a decal and a Lawns to Lobsters sign to place on their lawn. The suggested donation is \$5. The sign, designed by committee member Linda Scotland, features a red lobster holding up a shovel to promote "fewer chemicals, cleaner water."

While the letters went to residents living along the water, the campaign and pesticide control "affect the whole town," said Town Planner Christine Grimando, who also serves on the committee.

Using donated funds, the committee has also printed 500 brochures to distribute to residents. The brochure offers tips on soil testing, grass height, clover as a form of weed control and nitrogen fixer, and rain gardens, barrels and vegetative buffers as ways to keep water on lawns, instead of flowing down storm drains and eventually to the ocean.

Scotland, who also serves on the Cape Neddick River Association, made the initial pitch to start the group in York, according to Grimando. The Lawns to Lobsters Committee first met in December as a self-formed group, later becoming an ad hoc committee of the Conservation Commission, she said.

York's Lawns to Lobsters is based on the Lawns for Lobsters program developed in 2009 for the Kennebunkport Conservation Commission. While the program has spread statewide, York made it its own, Grimando said.

First came a name change. The local group decided Lawns to Lobsters sounded more dynamic than Lawns for Lobsters, according to Grimando.

The committee was also influenced by work being done by the Cape Neddick River Association, which formed about two years ago because of concerns of high bacteria counts in the Cape Neddick River.

At the same time, the town began enforcing an ordinance on the pumping of septic systems in the watershed area. Community Development Director Steve Burns and Hinz went door to door, conducting a septic system survey.

The letter sent to area river residents this week is considered Phase I of the Lawns to Lobsters program, Grimando said.

The committee has been learning pest management techniques from Parks and Recreation Foreman Ryan Coite, she said. These techniques and potential alternatives to impervious surfaces may become part of Phase II.

"This is the first run," Grimando said of the brochure. "We want to stay simple and brief."

The pledge states a resident will test the soil before fertilizing; apply only the amount of fertilizer needed; read the directions before fertilizing; not apply fertilizer if a strong rain is predicted; not mow the lawn shorter than three inches because tall grass needs less water; embrace clover as a fertilizer substitute — it also chokes out other weeds; use herbicides and insecticides sparingly; pick up after dogs; promote rain gardens and vegetative buffers as a way to prevent water run-off; and sweep up fertilizer from impervious surfaces.

The Lawns to Lobsters Committee includes representatives from the York Harbor Board, Old York Garden Club, lawn company owners and others. Committee members not already mentioned include Heidi Lumia, David Gittins, Fran Day, Brian Wood, Carol Donnelly, Joey Donnelly and Richard Sommers.

Lawns to Lobsters

For more information, visit www.lawns2lobsters.org or e-mail info@lawns2lobsters.org.

July 25

Maine blueberry farmer lures tiny but mighty allies

An organic grower uses nest boxes and forage plants to attract wild bees to pollinate his crop.

By Lynn Ascrizzi / Special to the Press Herald



[click image to enlarge](#)

Organic blueberry grower Doug Van Horn is using varied nesting box designs for the small wild pollinators.



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Organic blueberry grower Doug Van Horn, left, and Frank Drummond, an insect ecologist at the University of Maine at Orono, inspect a nesting box for native bees at Twitchell Hill Farm in Montville.

Lynn Ascrizzi photos

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MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS recommends "Farming for Bees: Guidelines for Providing Native Bee Habitat on Farms," by Mace Vaughan, Matthew Shepherd, Claire Kremen and Scott Hoffman Black, 2007, The Xerces Society. The 43-page book is available as a pdf download or to buy (\$15).

NATURAL FOODIE

AVERY YALE KAMILA is on vacation. Her "Natural Foodie" column will return soon

In the organic, wild blueberry fields at Twitchell Hill Farm in Montville, a rosy green blush of new growth has been emerging from underground stems since early spring. Now, the white, bell-shaped blossoms that clustered on tender stalks are ripening into small, dark-blue fruit, promising a late-summer berry crop raised without pesticides or herbicides.

But instead of depending on only honey bees to pollinate the 15-acre blueberry field, grower Doug Van Horn of Freedom has launched a project to attract tiny, wild pollinators called mason bees.

"It looks like a bee, but it's the size of a housefly," he said.

But size doesn't matter when it comes to this hard-working, native pollinator, he said. "They're about four to five times more effective as spring-season pollinators than honey bees," said Van Horn, who has tended the organic blueberry fields for more than 35 years.

There are 12 species of tiny bees commonly called mason bees that are associated with Maine blueberry fields, according to insect ecologist Frank Drummond, Ph.D., of the University of Maine at Orono.

Mason bees do not create colonies of busy worker bees that collectively produce honey and beeswax. With no hive or honey to defend, these native bees are unlikely to sting, and their sting is mild, Drummond said.

To lure these productive little pollinators into his fields, Van Horn had a local woodworker create specially designed mason bee nesting boxes made of pine, hemlock and basswood.

The boxes, roughly 8-by-8 inches in size, are comprised of 20 wooden tubes with about 1/4-inch holes.

"The bees go into the holes, lay eggs and deposit nectar and pollen, before they seal off the entrance. The eggs turn into larvae, and later, the larvae spin cocoons, which overwinter. In spring, they emerge as a fully mature bee," said Van Horn, 67.

Mason bee boxes are available commercially. But Van Horn did extensive research to incorporate what he hopes are the best designs. Moreover, his nesting boxes were created with whimsical variations.

"Mason bees don't like order. They like more random designs," he said.

His mason bee nesting box project was funded, in part, by a \$4,300 grant he received from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a U.S. Department of Agriculture program.

"They have a program for organic growers to improve organic farming operations," he said. The federal grant provided funds to create an access road to the blueberry fields, to remove weed and brush growth, to plant pollinator-attracting native plants and to create mason bee nesting boxes.

Van Horn is one of about 50 wild blueberry growers farming organically in the state, according to the University of Maine at Orono. Altogether, there are about 600 blueberry growers in Maine.

ALTERNATIVE PRACTICES

On a blustery day this spring, Van Horn was at Twitchell Hill, inspecting the 18 mason bee nesting boxes he had recently installed around his blueberry fields. With him that day was insect ecologist Drummond, who brought with him UMaine botanist Alison Dibble, Ph.D., and graduate students Kalyn Bickerman and Eric Venturini.

"There is renewed interest in native bees because of problems with honey bees caused by colony collapse disorder," Drummond said, referring to worldwide die-offs of honey bee populations, a phenomenon first noticed in 2006.

"It's caused in part by the synergistic reactions of bees being exposed to pesticides, viruses and fungal pathogens, parasitic mites and poor diet," he explained.

But attracting native pollinators involves a lot more than installing nesting boxes. Drummond also is keenly interested in land stewardship practices by farmers and how those affect pollination, native bee communities and honey bee populations.

"For instance, we have been looking at the amount of (plant) forage on farms that affects bees, the effects of pesticides used and the overall landscape that farms are embedded in," Drummond said.

That day at Twitchell Hill, UMaine student Venturini took soil samples along a three-quarter-acre strip of uncultivated land adjacent to the blueberry fields. By early June, the half-acre strip had been cultivated, limed and seeded with a trial mix of wildflower seeds known to attract bee pollinators. The mix, which contains both perennials and self-seeding annuals, was donated by Applewood Seed Co. of Arvada, Colo.

"If this mix works well, they (Applewood) will promote it," Van Horn said.

Seeds from a dozen wildflowers were included, such as, perennial lupine, wild sunflower, purple coneflower, Indian blanket, showy goldenrod, New England aster and bergamot.

"In a field like this, it wouldn't surprise me if there were 20 different species of wild bees, such as mason bees, orange-belted bumblebees, digger bees and sweat bees," Drummond said. "Out of the 237 wild bee species in Maine, slightly over 100 of them visit blueberries. Hopefully, the forage plants will attract a bunch of them," he said.

So far, the results of this first-year nest-box experiment are encouraging.

"Out of the 18 boxes, better than 50 percent have inhabitants. The holes are plugged up, which indicates mason bees have laid eggs," he said.

In summer, larvae hatch from the eggs. Adult bees emerge from their pupal stage by fall or winter but hibernate in their insulating nests until early spring, he added.

"I'm curious to know which box designs they will like best. That's what farming is about. It's waiting for nature to happen," Drummond said.

Drummond, who lives in Winterport, has been with UMaine for 25 years.

"If you put nesting boxes out, they will attract mason bees. It may take a year before you get the full results. A UMaine study in the mid-1990s showed a fourfold increase of mason bees in blueberry fields that had nesting boxes," he said.

Only about 20 blueberry growers in Maine are providing nesting boxes for mason bees, he added.

"I'd like to see a lot more. And not just nest blocks. I'd like to see more growers encourage native pollinators by selecting pest management strategies that reduce exposure of insecticides to bees and enhance flower sources."

HONEY BEES STILL RELIED ON

"But it's not just organic growers who are encouraging pollinators. Some conventional growers are planting pollinator strips, too," Drummond said.

One such conventional blueberry grower is Paul Sweetland of Searsmont. He leases 100 acres of blueberry fields in Hope, Rockport, Liberty and Waldoboro and also manages 1,300 acres of blueberry fields through Coastal Blueberry Service.

"I rely heavily on honey bees. I am always looking to use insecticides that won't harm the bees. We try not to spray anything when blueberries are blossoming," he said.

Sweetland said he keeps weeds out of the fields with herbicides.

"We have a lot of natural habitat in the areas that have insects that help with pollination. The native bees have been important to pollination," he said.

Numerous studies show that cultivated fields close to natural areas like woods, pastures or meadows have more wild bees.

Organic grower Theresa Gaffney of Highland Blueberry Farm in Stockton Springs maintains 25 acres of wild blueberries with her husband, Thomas Gaffney. She believes insecticides contribute to native and honey bee declines and disrupt a delicate ecological balance.

"People put insecticides on their fields. Well, what is a bee? An insect! It boils down to this: No bees, no food. Especially for the wild Maine blueberry. It doesn't pollinate itself. In order for us to have that bumper crop, we have to have good pollination."

Encouraging bee-friendly habitat is a big part of her strategy. "It's one of the reasons why I have rosa rugosa, autumn olive, wild blackberry, raspberry, lilacs, goldenrod, borage, calendula and bee balm for the native pollinators -- to feed them through their life cycle. These plants encourage bees to stay around. So, when blueberries blossom in May, I have a variety of bees -- bumblebees, sweat bees, mason bees," she said.

She also avoids using herbicides and lets foraging plants go a little wild.

"You have to consider: I may not like this weed, but what else does like it? Can I manage it in a way we can both be happy?"

Drummond is confident that, over the long term, a healthy population of mason bees positively affects blueberry yield.

"We have conclusive data that shows that the more native bees there are, the better the yield," he said.

The only caveat, he said, is the weather. "A winter with no snow and bitter cold can kill a lot of flower buds. If you have a nice winter and lots of bee pollinators and good flower buds, you will get a good yield. Bees like sunny weather," he said.

Van Horn, a retired Unity College math teacher, owns the blueberry field collectively with a handful of friends who once lived communally in a large, hand-built wood-and-stone house set on 70 acres of woods

and fields, at the end of Twitchell Hill Road.

Recently, he used weed whackers to control weeds that grew above the low bush blueberry plants, defoliating the weeds without using chemicals.

"In the last two years, I had two crop failures, partly as a result of the weather. It got me thinking about the whole pollination thing. I decided to get into the program to encourage wild bees," he said.

Lynn Ascrizzi is a freelance writer.

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July 23, 2012

You are here: [Home](#)

TALKING WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS ABOUT PESTICIDE USE IN MAINE

Talking With Your Neighbors about Pesticide Use in Maine

A mild winter and an extremely wet spring may have given bugs, blights, and weeds a leg up on Mainers this year. When these rise to the level of pests and become a problem -- to our homes, our gardens, our farms, and ourselves -- there are various ways of combating them, including pulling, pruning, and squishing, as well as using pesticides.

When pesticides are used in Maine, the Board of Pesticides Control, under the Maine Department of Agriculture, wants Mainers to know their rights and responsibilities regarding pesticide notification.

"If you want to know in advance what pesticides are being used and when, you have the right to know, but it's your responsibility to ask your neighbor first," said John Jemison, board chair. "Everyone has the right to use pesticides, but with that right comes the responsibility to abide by the law and notify neighbors who ask."

To help get the word out about Maine residents' rights and responsibilities, the Board of Pesticides Control is circulating an informational poster incorporating the message and directing those interested to go to the board's Web site or to call the board's office for more information.

For details on Maine's pesticide notification law, a copy of the poster for display, or to learn more about the proper use of pesticides, go to <http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org>

Or call 207-287-2731.

Posted on Monday, July 16, 2012 (Archive on Monday, August 06, 2012)

Posted by Jym St. Pierre Contributed by Jym St. Pierre

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Backyard Gardeners Given Pesticide Warnings

Submitted: 07/17/2012

ORONO - Following the warm spring, some backyard gardeners are finding their plants facing pests and diseases and are turning to pesticide use, however there are a few things to remember when using these chemicals.

The Maine Board of Pesticides Control is urging Mainers to know their responsibilities when it comes to being safe about tending to their crops.

Jim Dill, Cooperative Extension pest management specialist, says the first and foremost thing to do is to identify what is attacking the crops and monitor the crop.

Specialists do recommend pruning or other organic methods before using pesticides.

If chemical treatment is needed, it is important to read the precautionary instructions before application.

By reading the label on the back of the pesticides, a warning level will be given and from there one can know what level of clothing and other protection is needed when handling the chemicals.

For questions about pests and diseases, visit www.extension.umaine.edu/IPM.

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NPDES litigation floodgates swing open

Tue, 2012-08-14 16:53

NCC

The first of an expected barrage of legal actions by environmental groups regarding the new pesticide application permits was filed in Massachusetts. The Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) asked EPA to investigate whether the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health (MDPH) violated the Clean Water Act (CWA) when it declared a pest emergency for mosquitos and aerially sprayed more than 400,000 acres in the southeastern part of the state. PEER is charging the state knew well in advance it would have to spray to control Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) but declared an emergency situation to avoid the requirement for a permit. EEE is a rare but serious viral disease spread by mosquitoes that can affect people and horses.

The new National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit is authorized under the CWA. A 2009 court decision required EPA, for the first time ever, to develop permits for pesticide applications over, to, or near waters of the United States, including applications for mosquito control. EPA issued its final general permit in October of last year. The permit includes a provision for emergency situations.

(For more, see: [EPA proposal expands Clean Water Act regulation](#))

The MDPH reported on July 11 that EEE had been detected in mosquitoes in Massachusetts for the first time in 2012. Two of the four positive samples were in a kind of mosquito which feeds on mammals, a point of particular concern to health officials. An agency spokesman said the decision on whether to aerially treat was made in a matter of days based on EEE risk and the plan was executed shortly thereafter.

The NCC and other agricultural groups have opposed these permits on the grounds that pesticides are sufficiently regulated under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide & Rodenticide Act making the NPDES permits redundant and burdensome while providing no additional environmental benefit. The CWA also allows for citizen suits such as this one.

H.R. 872, which would repeal these permits, was passed in the House in March and by the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. However, Sens. Boxer (D-Calif.) and Cardin (D-Md.) have prevented any further Senate action on the bill.

Source URL: <http://westernfarmpress.com/government/npdes-litigation-floodgates-swing-open>

From: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [mailto:usaepa@service.govdelivery.com]

Sent: Wednesday, July 18, 2012 4:21 PM

To: Jennings, Henry

Subject: Pesticide Program Update: (1) New Use Restrictions on Insecticide Chlorpyrifos Address Bystander Risk from Spray Drift; Partial Response to Chlorpyrifos Petition and (2) Federal Register Items for July 9 July 13, 2012

EPA Pesticide Program Updates



From EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs

www.epa.gov/pesticides

July 18, 2012

In This Update:

- New Use Restrictions on Insecticide Chlorpyrifos Address Bystander Risk from Spray Drift; EPA's Partial Response to Chlorpyrifos Petition Denies Claims

- Federal Register Items for July 9 – July 13, 2012

New Use Restrictions on Insecticide Chlorpyrifos Address Bystander Risk from Spray Drift; EPA's Partial Response to Chlorpyrifos Petition Denies Claims

EPA is requiring significant reductions in application rates and mandatory buffers around sensitive sites to protect children and other bystanders who live, attend school, play, or otherwise spend time next to sites where chlorpyrifos is applied. To ensure timely implementation of the spray drift mitigation, EPA is taking steps to make sure that the new use restrictions appear on all chlorpyrifos agricultural product labels starting in late 2012.

To increase protection for children and other bystanders, the lower application rates and other spray drift mitigation measures ensure that any chlorpyrifos exposure outside the application site will not reach harmful levels. Maximum aerial application rates are being significantly reduced from about 6 pounds per acre to about 2 pounds per acre. Other new mitigation measures include buffer zones for ground and aerial applications around sensitive sites such as residential lawns, homes, sidewalks, outdoor recreational areas, and all property associated with buildings typically occupied by people.

As part of the agency's ongoing registration review, EPA examined chlorpyrifos spray drift and potential bystander exposures using current scientific methods. EPA found that health risks from exposure to chlorpyrifos spray drift around treated fields can be lowered through the use of buffers and specific application methods. The buffer distances are greatest for aerial applications, which pose the highest risk. By adopting the new mitigation measures, applicators can effectively lower spray drift levels and reduce risks to bystanders.

EPA's new mitigation measures also respond in part to a petition filed by the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Pesticide Action Network North America that asked EPA to revoke all tolerances and cancel all registrations of chlorpyrifos. In a partial response addressing the first six of ten petition claims, EPA has found that none of the six claims warrants revoking tolerances or canceling registrations for chlorpyrifos at this time.

EPA's response to three of the remaining four claims involves highly complex assessments using precedent-setting risk assessment methodologies. Consistent with the agency's external peer review policy, EPA sought advice on these issues from the FIFRA Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) at a meeting on April 10-12, 2012, and recently received the SAP's final report, dated July 11, 2012. The agency will consider the panel's comments in completing the petition response and final human health risk assessment for the chlorpyrifos registration review. EPA will address the risk issues necessary to respond to the petition in its entirety by December 31, 2012. EPA intends to complete the comprehensive chlorpyrifos human health risk assessment, including both its dietary risk assessment and occupational risk assessment, in 2014.

The petitioners' fourth remaining claim, that EPA failed to incorporate inhalation routes of exposure, is partly addressed by the chlorpyrifos spray drift risk assessment and new spray drift use restrictions that the agency is announcing today. The agency is continuing to assess potential exposure and risk from spray drift and volatilization following chlorpyrifos applications, taking into consideration the recently received

complete response to the petition in December 2012. Docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2007-1005 at Regulations.gov includes NRDC and PANNA's petition, EPA's partial response, and related documents. Docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0040 at Regulations.gov includes documents related to the SAP's April 2012 meeting, Scientific Issues Associated with Chlorpyrifos Health Effects.

Chlorpyrifos is used widely for controlling insects on food crops including fruits, nuts, vegetables, and grains, and on non-food sites such as golf course turf, industrial sites, greenhouses, nurseries, sod farms, and wood products. Public health uses include aerial and ground-based fogger treatments to control adult mosquitoes. An organophosphate, chlorpyrifos can cause cholinesterase inhibition in humans; that is, it can over-stimulate the nervous system if there is sufficient exposure.

For further information about EPA's registration review of chlorpyrifos including the agency's July 2012 spray drift risk assessment and new spray drift mitigation measures, see [Docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0850](#) at [Regulations.gov](#). See also the chlorpyrifos page in Chemical Search, www.epa.gov/pesticides/chemicalsearch/.

Federal Register Items for July 9 – July 13, 2012

The following eight items related to pesticides were published in the Federal Register this week:

1. Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance; *Pasteuria* spp. (*Rotylenchulus reniformis* nematode)--Pr3
2. Registration Review; Pesticide Dockets Opened for Review and Comment and Other Actions
3. Pesticide Tolerances; Methoxyfenozide
4. Tolerance Actions; Dicloran and Formetanate
5. Registration Review Decision; *Agrobacterium radiobacter*
6. Pesticide Tolerances; Azoxystrobin
7. Proposed Pesticide Tolerance; Trinexapac-ethyl
8. Proposed Pesticide Tolerance; Sulfentrazone

1. Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance; *Pasteuria* spp. (*Rotylenchulus reniformis* nematode)--Pr3

Date: 07/09/2012

Citation: Volume 77, Number 131, Pages 40271-40276

Link: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-0805-0003>

Purpose: This regulation establishes an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for residues of *Pasteuria* spp. (*Rotylenchulus reniformis* nematode)--Pr3 in or on all food and feed commodities regulated as pesticides and used in accordance with

label directions and good agricultural practices.

Chemical: Pasteuria spp. (Rotylenchulus reniformis nematode)--Pr3

Comments: Due by September 7, 2012; docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-0805-0003

Contact: Jeannine Kausch, Biopesticides and Pollution Prevention Division, Office of Pesticide Programs (703) 347-8920; kausch.jeannine@epa.gov

2. Registration Review; Pesticide Dockets Opened for Review and Comment and Other Actions

Date: 07/09/2012

Citation: Volume 77, Number 119, Pages 40048-40051

Link: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-1009-0001>

Purpose: EPA has established registration review dockets for the pesticides listed in the table in Unit III.A. With this document, EPA is opening the public comment period for these registration reviews. Registration review is EPA's periodic review of pesticide registrations to ensure that each pesticide continues to satisfy the statutory standard for registration, that is, the pesticide can perform its intended function without unreasonable adverse effects on human health or the environment.

Chemicals: Various

Comments: Due by August 19, 2012; docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-1009-0001 Contact: Kevin Costello, Pesticide Re-evaluation Division, Office of Pesticide Programs; (703); costello.kevin@epa.gov

3. Pesticide Tolerances; Methoxyfenozide

Date: 07/11/2012

Citation: Volume 77, Number 133, Pages 40806-40812

Link: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0343-0004>

Purpose: This regulation establishes tolerances for residues of methoxyfenozide in or on multiple commodities which are identified and discussed later and for indirect or inadvertent combined residues of the methoxyfenozide on various other commodities.

Chemicals: Methoxyfenozide

Comments: Due by September 10, 2012; docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0343-0004 Contact: Debra Rate, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs; (703) 306-0309; rate.debra@epa.gov

4. Tolerance Actions; Dicloran and Formetanate

Date: 07/11/2012

Citation: Volume 77, Number 133, Pages 40812-40815

Link: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0507-0006>

Purpose: EPA is revoking certain tolerances for the fungicide dicloran and the insecticide formetanate hydrochloride in follow-up to amended registrations that deleted specific uses, leaving no dicloran and formetanate hydrochloride registrations for those uses. Also, in accordance with current Agency practice, EPA is making minor revisions to the tolerance expressions for dicloran and formetanate hydrochloride and to specific tolerance nomenclatures for dicloran.

Chemicals: Dicloran and Formetanate

Comments: Due by September 10, 2012; docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0507-0006

Contact: Joseph Nevola, Pesticide Re-evaluation Division, Office of Pesticide Programs; (703) 308-8037; nevola.joseph@epa.gov

5. Registration Review Decision; Agrobacterium radiobacter

Date: 07/11/2012

Citation: Volume 77, Number 133, Pages 40880-40881

Link: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0878-0010>

Purpose: This notice announces the availability of EPA's proposed registration review decision for the pesticide Agrobacterium radiobacter and opens a public comment period on the proposed decision.

Chemicals: Agrobacterium radiobacter

Comments: Due by September 10, 2012; docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0878-0010

Contact: Kevin Costello, Pesticide Re-evaluation Division, Office of Pesticide Programs; (703) 308-8090; costello.kevin@epa.gov

6. Pesticide Tolerances; Azoxystrobin

Date: 07/13/2012

Citation: Volume 77, Number 135, Pages 41284-41291

Link: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0398-0005>

Purpose: This regulation establishes tolerances for residues of azoxystrobin in or on multiple commodities which are identified and discussed later in this document. Interregional Research Project Number 4 (IR-4) and Syngenta Crop Protection requested these tolerances under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA).

Chemical: Azoxystrobin

Comments: Due by September 11, 2012; docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0398-0005

Contact: Andrew Ertman, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs; (703) 308-9367; ertman.andrew@epa.gov

7. Proposed Pesticide Tolerance; Trinexapac-ethyl

Date: 07/13/2012

Citation: Volume 77, Number 135, Pages 41346-41348

Link: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-0524-0023>

Purpose: This document proposes to amend the existing trinexapac-ethyl tolerance levels for wheat, forage and wheat, middlings as well as change the commodity definition for hog, kidney. Additionally the EPA proposes to establish tolerances for residues of trinexapac-ethyl in or on barley, bran; sugarcane, molasses; and wheat, bran under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA).

Chemical: Trinexapac-ethyl

Comments: Due by September 11, 2012; docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-0524-0023

Contact: Bethany Benbow, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs; (703) 347-8072; benbow.bethany@epa.gov

8. Proposed Pesticide Tolerance; Sulfentrazone

Date: 07/12/2012

Citation: Volume 77, Number 134, Pages 41081-41088

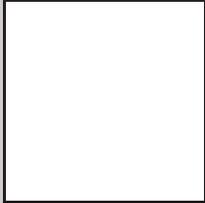
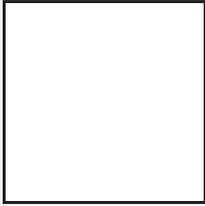
Link: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-07-12/html/2012-17020.htm>

Purpose: This regulation establishes tolerances for residues of sulfentrazone in or on multiple commodities which are identified and discussed later in this document. Interregional Research Project Number 4 (IR-4) and FMC requested these tolerances under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA).

Chemical: Sulfentrazone

Comments: Due by September 10, 2012; docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0758

Contact: Andrew Ertman, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs; (703) 308-9367; ertman.andrew@epa.gov



EPA distributes its Pesticide Program Updates to external stakeholders and citizens who have expressed an interest in the agency's pesticide program activities and decisions. This update service is part of EPA's continuing effort to improve public access to federal pesticide information.

For general questions on pesticides and pesticide poisoning prevention, contact the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC), toll-free, at: 1-800-858-7378, by E-mail at npic@ace.orst.edu, or, by visiting their website at: <http://npic.orst.edu>

To report an environmental violation, visit EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/complaints/index.html>

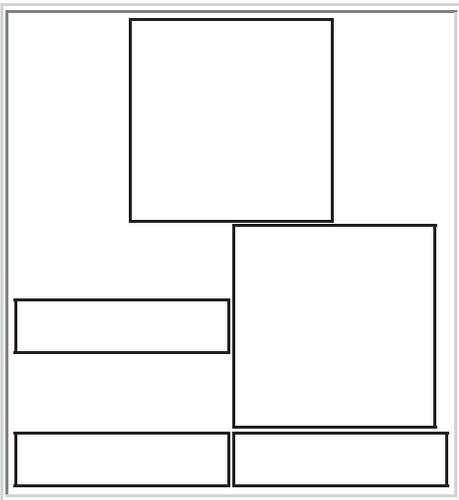
For information about ongoing activities in the Office of Pesticide Programs, visit our homepage at: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides>

Telephone 703-305-5017 or write us directly at Communication Services Branch, Office of Pesticide Programs (7506 P), US Environmental Protection Agency, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004-2403.



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Bats At High Risk From Pesticide Exposure

TUESDAY, 28 AUGUST 2012 09:08 **PRESS RELEASE** SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL



(0 Votes)

Washington, DC--(ENEWSPP)--August 28, 2012. New research reveals that bats may be at greater risk from pesticide exposure than previously suspected. When foraging at dusk, bats can be exposed to agricultural chemicals by eating insects recently sprayed with pesticides. A study from the University of Koblenz-Landau in Germany reveals that bats, due to their long life span and tendency to only have one offspring at a time, are particularly sensitive to reproductive effects from pesticides.

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The study, "**Bats at risk? Bat activity and insecticide residue analysis of food items in an apple orchard,**" published in Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, details the health effects of bats foraging on insects in an apple orchard after it was sprayed with the insecticides **fenoxycarb** and **chlorpyrifos**. After field applications of the pesticides, scientists measured the remaining chemical residues on flies, moths and spiders for two weeks. The highest residues were recorded on leaf dwelling insects and spiders, while lower contamination was found for flying insects. Based on this data scientists calculated exposure scenarios for different bat species, each with different feeding habits, and found that those which fed off insects from the leaves of fruit trees to be most affected.

Researchers indicated that current European Union risk-assessments do not adequately consider these important pollinators when reviewing the safety of a pesticide (United States Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] risk assessments also do not consider bats specifically). The scientists based their risk-assessment formulas on those used for mice and shrews, but further noted that such formulas are not sufficient for bats because of their unique ecological characteristics.

Bats can live up to twenty years, giving the animals a much longer time for their bodies to accumulate toxic levels of pesticides. Additionally, researchers note, "their low reproductive rates (usually a single offspring per year) require high adult survival to avoid population declines and dictate slow recovery of impacted populations." Lipophilic pesticides, those that can accumulate in fat tissue, are particularly dangerous to bats. During migration or winter hibernation, if bats consume large amounts of pesticide contaminated insects, when their fat stores are metabolized pesticide concentrations can reach toxic levels in the animal's brain.

Organophosphate pesticides such as chlorpyrifos are highly toxic to humans and the environment. Chlorpyrifos is a frequent water contaminant and a long range toxin, exposing communities and polluting pristine areas far from where it was applied. Volatilization drift—the evaporation of the pesticide after application—is also part of the problem for chlorpyrifos. **A 2009 study** found the pesticide to have significant impacts on the growth and development of amphibians **miles away** from the site where it was first applied. **A USGS study from 2007** concluded that the breakdown products of chlorpyrifos are up to 100 times more toxic than the original.

Chlorpyrifos is a neurotoxic insecticide that was banned from residential applications after EPA determined that cumulative exposure resulted in serious adverse health outcomes, especially for children. Short term effects of exposure to chlorpyrifos in humans includes chest tightness, blurred vision, headaches, coughing and wheezing,

weakness, nausea and vomiting, coma, seizures, and even death. Prenatal and early childhood exposure has been linked to low birth weights, developmental delays, ADHD and other health effects.

Fenoxycarb, a **carbamate** class insecticide, is currently being **voluntarily phased out** in the U.S by its two registrants Syngenta and Whitmire Micro-Gen Research Laboratories. The chemical can still be used until the end of 2012 by Syngenta and the end of 2013 by Whitmire Microgen.

Fenoxycarb is toxic to fish and aquatic organisms. It is considered a likely carcinogen by EPA, and acute exposure in humans can result in sensory and behavioral disturbances, incoordination, headache, dizziness, restlessness, anxiety, depressed motor function and seizures. Severe intoxication may result in psychosis, seizures, and coma. Other symptoms may include wheezing, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, ocular meiosis, muscle weakness, and salivation. The chemical has also been linked to illnesses in **Gulf War veterans**.

Our **pollinators** are at risk. In 2006, around the same time that honeybees started disappearing from their hives, a hibernating bat in a New York cave was discovered with a strange white fungus growing on its muzzle and wings. Since that first detection, **white nose syndrome (WNS)**, a disease caused by the fungus *Geomyces destructans*, has spread across the United States. Like colony collapse disorder in honeybees, the direct cause of WNS is poorly understood. While this new research does not mention the role of pesticides in WNS, it does conclude that bats should be given greater consideration in risk-assessments for pesticide products. Not only can bats be exposed through their diet, but they can also encounter pesticides through drift and inhalation, as farmers often spray their fields at night to avoid harming honey bees.

Last year, **Beyond Pesticides called on Congress** to stop the spread of WNS, which has killed more than 5.7 to 6.7 million bats in North America. Bats with WNS exhibit uncharacteristic behavior during cold winter months, including flying outside in the day and clustering near the entrances of hibernacula. Bats have been found sick and dying in unprecedented numbers in and around caves and mines. In some caves 90% to 100% of hibernating bats succumb to the virus.

Insect-eating bats play an important economic role in agriculture and timber production. **A 2011 study** in the journal *Science* found that the value of bats' pest-control services to agricultural operations in the United States ranges from \$3.7 billion to \$53 billion per year.

Researchers believe that the fungus arrived from Europe on the boots or gear of cave visitors. Those who visit caves are encouraged to wash all their gear carefully before reentering another cave in order to avoid spreading the fungus. The fungus has recently been detected as far west as Oklahoma and as far south as Alabama.

For more information on what you can do to protect our native pollinators, visit Beyond Pesticides' **pollinator protection page**.

Sources: **ScienceDaily**, <http://www.beyondpesticides.org>

All unattributed positions and opinions in this piece are those of Beyond Pesticides.



Display Settings: Abstract

Environ Toxicol Chem. 2012 Jul;31(7):1556-63. doi: 10.1002/etc.1834. Epub 2012 May 9.

Bats at risk? Bat activity and insecticide residue analysis of food items in an apple orchard.

Stahlschmidt P, Brühl CA.

Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of Koblenz-Landau, Landau, Germany.

Abstract

Although bats are reported as being threatened by pesticides, they are currently not considered in European Union pesticide risk assessments. The reason for that contradiction is probably related to the scarcity of information on bat activity in pesticide-treated fields and the pesticide residues on their food items. The authors recorded bat activity and measured pesticide residues on bat-specific food items following applications of two insecticides in an apple orchard. High activity levels of the common pipistrelle bat, a foraging habitat generalist, were detected. Airborne foragers and bats that take part of their food by gleaning arthropods from the vegetation were recorded frequently. The initial value and the decline of pesticide residues were found to depend on the arthropod type, their surface to volume ratio, their mobility, and the mode of action of the applied pesticide. The highest initial residue values were measured on foliage-dwelling arthropods. By following the toxicity-exposure ratio approaches of the current pesticide risk assessment, no acute dietary risk was found for all recorded bat species. However, a potential reproductive risk for bat species that include foliage-dwelling arthropods in their diet was indicated. The results emphasize the importance of adequately evaluating the risks of pesticides to bats, which, compared to other mammals, are potentially more sensitive due to their ecological traits.

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July 22

[Maine Gardener: Eradicating weeds takes patience, persistence and hard work](#)

By TOM ATWELL

The weeds have been terrible this year. With all the wet weather in May and June, followed by temperatures in the 90s, they have been persistent and profuse.

We have had dock -- broadleaf and curly, with the botanical name Rumex -- invading our raspberries and the nearby grounds. Purslane, chickweed and clover have been all over the vegetable garden recently.

And then there are violets, which probably aren't a weed -- but they sure do like to crowd out the tomatoes and peppers. And we are still getting a few dandelions, but they were more of a problem in the spring.

It could be that it just seems like weeds have been much worse and I have been paying more attention. Nancy has in the past done most of the weeding, but in this, my first year of semi-retirement, I committed myself to doing a lot more to keep the weeds down.

I got some unexpected help in March. A really heavy box with two containers of Preen showed up at the newspaper office, and I brought it home.

One container was Organic Preen Vegetable Garden Weed Preventer, which contains processed granules of corn gluten meal. This is a byproduct of making corn syrup, and for some reason the corn gluten meal prevents sprouting seeds from producing roots.

The Preen label did not say it could be used on lawns early in the spring to prevent crabgrass, but there are corn gluten meal products sold for that purpose.

Following the label directions, I put this down in the area where I planted a new bed of strawberries and the early rows of peas. The label says this will keep weeds down for four to six weeks, and it really did the job. I could have bought another container and put more down, but by late May, I wanted to plant cucumbers and squash in between the pea rows, and I feared the corn gluten might prevent them from sprouting.

I haven't used the Preen for flower beds yet.

In my battle to keep weeds at a minimum, I contacted the Weed Science Society of America. The person who answered the phone directed me to an article that Robert Norris, a professor emeritus at the University of California-Davis, wrote for the society: "Never Let 'Em Seed."

After reading the article, I no longer wonder how the purslane keeps coming back to our garden. Norris conducted research and found that a single purslane plant can produce 2 million seeds.

Chickweed is lazy compared to that, producing only 25,000 seeds per plant.

And those seeds stay in the ground, creating what Norris calls the "weed seed bank."

"Seeds 'in the bank' can remain viable for quite a long time and sprout when conditions are right," Norris wrote. "That means it will take several years for you to reach your weed-free goal."

He said some weed seeds die in two or three years, but others can last decades.

"On average, though, the bulk of your weed seed bank will be depleted in about five years if no additional seeds are added," Norris wrote. "That means diligence is the key. Never let one weed go to seed, or you will be back to square one."

Norris discounted the weeds you get from seeds dropped by birds and by windblown weeds such as dandelions. Birds drop few annual weeds, and you should be able to handle the wind-blown weeds with little trouble.

So, since this is the first year of my diligent weeding program, I may see some results by 2017.

Norris noted that weed fighting in the vegetable garden is easier than fighting weeds in perennial gardens. Weeds in perennial gardens are often perennial as well, which means they keep coming back even if you don't let them go to seed. While you do have to keep them from going to seed, you also have to be diligent about removing their shoots and tubers so that, eventually, they will die and you will no longer have to deal with them.

Back to the vegetable garden, there are two basic ways of weeding: Hoeing and hand-pulling weeds, with or without the help of a trowel.

I prefer hoeing, because you can cover more ground in a shorter period of time. I pick up some of the bigger weeds and put them in a pail. Having learned from the sad experience of accidentally hoeing up a pepper plant or two, I hand-weed within 6 inches of the plants we want to keep.

Nancy hand- and trowel-weeds exclusively, partly because she thinks it is neater and partly because she thinks it prevents weeds from coming back. She has a point, at least as far as purslane goes.

Purslane, says Marilyn J. Dwelley in her book "Summer and Fall Wildflowers of New England," published by Down East, "is hard to kill, will survive uprooting and exposure to the sun, and will take root again."

At 2 million seeds per plant and the ability to come back from the dead, it is one tough weed. I have to spend more time weeding.

THE McLAUGHLIN FOUNDATION and Roberts Farm Preserve will benefit from "The Colors of Sun and Shade" garden tour next Sunday, July 29, in Norway.

Tickets cost \$12 in advance, and are available at the McLaughlin Garden at 743-8820 or mclaughlingarden.org, and \$15 on the day of the show.

Tom Atwell has been writing the Maine Gardener column since 2004. He is a freelance writer who gardens in Cape Elizabeth, and can be contacted at 767-2297 or at:

tomatwell@me.com

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July 22

[Genetically modified-food fight faces vote](#)

California's Proposition 37 would require labels on products whose genes have been altered.

Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - A fight over genetically engineered foods has been heating up in the nation's grocery aisles. Now it's headed for the ballot box.



[click image to enlarge](#)

A man protests outside the Monsanto facility in Davis, Calif., in March. The FDA has ruled GMO foods – made from genetically modified organisms – safe, but concern persists.

The Associated Press

[Select images available for purchase in the Maine Today Photo Store](#)

Voters will soon decide whether to make California the first state in the country to require labels on products such as sweet corn whose genes have been altered to make them resistant to pests.

Proposition 37 promises to set up a big-money battle pitting natural food businesses and activists against multinational companies including PepsiCo, Coca-Cola and Kellogg. Backers and opponents have already raised nearly \$4 million combined for campaigns to sway voters, an amount that's likely to swell into the tens of millions of dollars as the November election approaches.

So-called GMO foods -- those made from genetically modified organisms -- have been declared safe by U.S. regulators. But concern persists about the unforeseen consequences of this laboratory tinkering on human health and the environment.

The outcome in California could rattle the entire U.S. food chain. An estimated 70 percent to 80 percent of processed foods sold in supermarkets could be affected, industry experts said, along with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. The measure qualified for the California ballot with nearly 1 million signatures; labeling in the state could set a precedent that's followed nationwide.

"This will be a big fight," said Shaun Bowler, a University of California, Riverside, political scientist specializing in initiatives. "This is a popular issue because people are very afraid of the words 'genetically engineered.' And the people who sell this stuff are worried about losing sales."

Backers of the initiative are encouraged by a pair of recent national opinion surveys showing that about nine out of 10 consumers support labeling. A California-specific poll, released Thursday by the Business Roundtable and the Pepperdine University School of Public Policy, showed Proposition 37 has an almost 3-to-1 ratio of support, with 64.9 percent of prospective voters favoring it, compared with 23.9 percent opposed.

"People are interested in knowing what's in their food," said Grant Lundberg, a Sacramento Valley organic rice grower who's helping spearhead Proposition 37. "It's something they think is important."

Opponents say labeling would unfairly besmirch popular and reputable products, raise food prices and spur frivolous lawsuits while doing little to protect the public's health. Passage of the initiative could create a cumbersome patchwork of state food-labeling laws if other states follow California's lead, they contend.

"It really boils down to guilt by association that makes genetic engineering something bad, a 'Frankenfood,'" said Bob Goldberg, a UCLA plant molecular biologist and a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

What's clear is that the genetically modified foods have quickly and quietly become a fixture at the American dinner table. If you ate a bowl of cereal this morning, drank a Coke for lunch or prepared packaged macaroni and cheese or an ear of corn for dinner, then you probably ate something that has been genetically engineered. A majority of the foods on supermarket shelves that come in a box, bag or can probably would need to be labeled if Proposition 37 becomes law.

Most meat and dairy products, eggs, certified organic foods, alcoholic beverages and restaurant meals would be exempt. In addition, foods could not be labeled "natural" if any of their ingredients were genetically engineered.

The initiative defines genetically engineered food as produced from a plant or animal whose biological traits contain DNA that has been manipulated in a laboratory at the cellular level. The technique was pioneered more than two decades ago to boost productivity by making crops resistant to insects, plant diseases, pesticides and herbicides. The biggest successes have been with commodities that are staples in most processed foods. Genetically engineered crops account for about 90 percent of U.S. corn, soybean and sugar beet production.

And the trend is growing. Genetically modified fresh fruits and vegetables, including Hawaiian papayas, sweet corn, zucchini and yellow squash are now widely sold. Agribusinesses and their seed subsidiaries are pushing to develop melons that taste sweeter, onions that don't bring tears and tomatoes that stay juicy longer.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has decreed genetically engineered foods to be safe. Although the agency requires that most food products carry labels with detailed health and safety information, the agency has ruled that labels need not reflect whether ingredients have been genetically engineered.

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New Jersey may require warnings for bird killings

MILLVILLE — The fallout from a large-scale, state-sanctioned bird poisoning here that frightened a neighborhood Tuesday may lead New Jersey to require that the public get advance notice of such cullings in future cases.

Meanwhile, the Millville farmer who carried out the culling said through an intermediary Wednesday that it wasn't his intention to kill so many birds and the pesticide was applied in greater strength than intended.

Residents were shocked and scared Tuesday morning when dead and dying birds of a variety of species began falling from the sky.

City and Cumberland County officials quickly figured out the cause was a deliberate, legal pesticide application by local farmer Richard Ingraldi. The farmer had taken the step to stem severe crop losses to birds after other, nonlethal methods had failed.

Ingraldi did nothing illegal, authorities agree, but the situation left residents upset.

The pesticide use to kill birds is relatively rare in New Jersey, state Department of Environmental Protection spokesman Larry

Hajna said Wednesday.

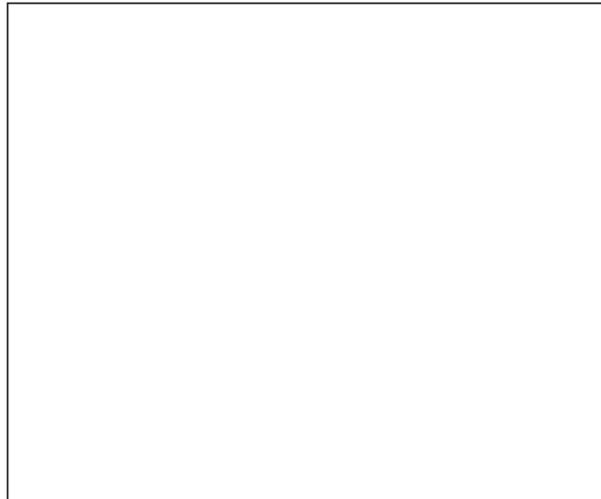
Such licenses do not require advance warnings. However, Hajna said, the department's pesticide bureau does feel "some kind of notification would be a good idea."

Wes Kline, a Rutgers University extension service agent stationed in Rosenhayn, visited Ingraldi Farms near Cedarville Road and Rieck Avenue on Wednesday.

"There is a lot of corn which was stripped by the birds," Kline said. "He definitely lost many dozens of ears. The economic loss is real. He did everything right before using the product by contacting the New Jersey Division of Fish and (Wildlife) to check about the legality of the products. He also tried to contact the USDA Fish and Wildlife unit, but got no response until after the application."

Kline said the federal agency, when it did reach Ingraldi, stated his application method was correct.

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“The grower tried electronic calls and another chemical, which is used to repel birds, but neither worked,” Kline said. “The birds became accustomed to both attempts. He then had to make another attempt, with another product, or lose his complete crop.”

Kline said the second chemical Ingraldi used, Avitrol, which was should not cause many deaths if used at low concentrations. It is intended to scare away birds by causing the birds that eat it to call out in distress, signaling others to avoid the area.

“He didn’t realize it would do that (mass kill),” Kline said. “Another misconception is t he (Avitrol) label says ‘double strength,’” Kline said. “The implication is he put it on at double the rate, which is not true.”

Kline said the behavior of the birds that are eating the corn ears is unusual. A flock of blackbirds was back in the field Wednesday afternoon, he added.

Ingraldi “said he’s had problems in the past but never this bad,” Kline said. “They stripped the husks right off the ears, and it wasn’t because the kernels were exposed. It (the husk) was closed. It’s almost like a line. It was like a row. We just don’t see that kind of damage.”

Kline concurred with the DEP that it’s rare to use pesticides to kill birds. He noted the U.S. Department of Agriculture does it in some areas, but only to protect the public health.

Kline said people also should know the Avitrol that Ingraldi used is not sprayed on the crops. Individual kernels are treated with it and then spread out in areas where the targeted birds are known to go.

County Deputy Freeholder Director Thomas Sheppard, who is a farmer, said Wednesday he had never heard of pesticide being used to kill nuisance birds.

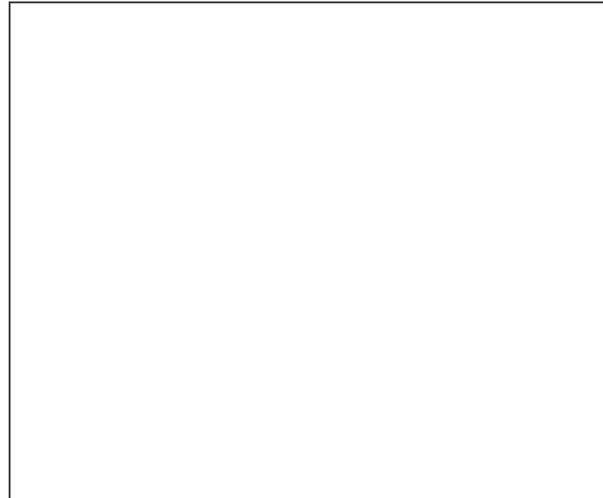
Anyone with a complaint could take the matter to the county Agriculture Development Board, he said.

“They come in, cite their case, and it goes to arbitration,” Sheppard said. “Then, it’s decided if a farmer is within his rights as a farmer.”

Millville Vice Mayor Joseph Derella said Wednesday that city and county emergency workers did a great job Tuesday.

“At this point, the city is gathering the facts from everyone who was involved,” he said. “After we have that in place, that may

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create a dialogue with DEP on their thoughts about possible advance notification.”

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Lapses found in Northampton schools' toxins use plans; Update promised

By *Kristin Palpini*
Created 08/13/2012 - 5:00am

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• **Related story:** [List of pesticides, herbicides in use in Northampton schools](#) ^[1]

NORTHAMPTON - The toxins being sprayed on the grounds of the city's public schools may surprise some people.

That's because the herbicide Lesco Prosecutor is not listed on any of the schools' integrated pest management plans, a state-mandated record that includes a list of all pesticides and herbicides that will be used inside and outside of a school.

Required under the 2000 state Act Protecting Children and Families from Harmful Pesticides, an integrated pest management plan, or IPM, lay out how individual schools will address pest, mold and problem vegetation.

The act was intended to encourage planners to emphasize organic and non-toxic pest solutions over pesticide application and to make the public aware of what toxins are being applied at public and private schools as well as day care centers. Anyone can walk into a school and see its IPM plan and five years' worth of pesticide application records.

While most schools in Massachusetts have an IPM plan registered with the state Department of Agricultural Resources, it is unclear whether the plans are being followed.

Although the law was passed 12 years ago, inspectors have yet to visit every school in the state. It is not known how many schools are still to be checked, but Northampton's director of custodial services, Michael Diemand, said pesticide inspectors have not looked into the city's schools.

Schools are required to notify staff and students and their families two days prior to a pesticide application. But anti-pesticide advocates say that without accurate information, families are not able to make decisions about their child's level of exposure and well-being.

"All of life is weighing risks and coming out on the side of the least risk to your health," said Nancy Alderman, president of Environment and Human Health Inc. at Yale University. "How would you ever know what the risks are without the right information?"

Children are at a higher risk of being affected by pesticides than adults because their metabolic rates are

faster, they process chemicals differently, they are still developing and they spend time on the ground playing, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Pesticides can block the absorption of nutrients necessary for healthy growth. Exposure to a toxin can permanently alter the way an individual's biological system operates, the EPA says.

Tayrn Lascola is one of Massachusetts' four pesticide inspectors responsible for keeping tabs on school IPM plans in addition to monitoring the registration, sale and containment of pesticides in the state. She said she doesn't know how many school IPM violations she uncovers every month or year, but noted that finding an issue isn't rare.

"I wouldn't say it's rare," Lascola said, "but it's not every time we go out either. I guess I'd say it's right in the middle."

Northampton's use

The curbs, beds, traprock and fence lines of Northampton's high school, middle school and four elementary schools have been treated on and off with Lesco Prosecutor since at least 2008 without the weed-killing pesticide ever making it onto an IPM plan, according to a Gazette review of five years' worth of school application records and IPM plans, both of which are maintained by the schools.

Some of the schools had Lesco application and public health information packets mixed in with their pesticide records.

Lesco has been applied up to five times a year at a single school, but typically areas were treated once a year at each school. There are some years in which schools skipped an application of Lesco. If the chemicals were applied, it was during the summer after school let out.

When first asked about the discrepancy between the IPM plans and the application records, Diemand said that since Lesco Prosecutor can be bought by anyone at stores, it did not need to be on the plans.

But that's not what the law says.

"By law - especially for outdoor use - any pesticide used has to be what is in the IPM plan," said Trevor Battle, an environmental health inspector for crop and pest services with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. "If our inspectors find a discrepancy, there are a number of tools, enforcement tools, they could use."

Later, after going over the school's records, Diemand said the school IPM plans need to be updated to reflect what pesticides are being used at the schools and he intends to get started on that task.

While Northampton High School's IPM plan was updated this year and the middle school's plan was brought up to speed in 2011, the elementary schools' plans are older. Bridge Street, Ryan Road and Leeds elementary school plans have not been updated since 2008.

Diemand also noted that Lesco has the same active ingredient, glyphosate, as Roundup, which Ryan Road Elementary School is approved to use.

"The important part is, he did list at the school what he did spray," Diemand said of the accuracy of the application records. "There isn't a lot of difference between Roundup and Prosecutor. Prosecutor is just a cheaper brand."

Glyphosate, the active ingredient in Lesco as well as Roundup, has a low toxicity rating, according to the

EPA. But glyphosate isn't the chemical to be wary of in pesticides that use it. Inert or inactive ingredients mixed with glyphosate to help plants absorb the chemical may make the pesticide more toxic, according to the National Pesticide Information Network, a joint effort of the Oregon State University and the EPA.

Ron Harrison, director for technical services of the national pest control company Orkin, says sometimes not applying pesticides can put children at greater risk than if the toxins were used. He used an example of a yellowjacket hive at a school playground.

Noting that 1 to 3 percent of children have an allergic reaction to stinging insects, Harrison said, "What do you do? Make the kids stay inside so they can't play? Or do you do an emergency application and kill them?"

Only one

Northampton is the only school district in Hampshire County that has pesticides listed on all of its IPM plans. Most other school districts have adopted no-pesticide policies, but there are a few schools in the county that use the toxins: Berkshire Trail Elementary School in Cummington, Belchertown High School, Hopkins Academy in Hadley and South Hadley High School.

Pledges not to use pesticides do allow for emergency applications. Examples of an emergency would be a wasp nest at a school entrance way or a poison ivy outbreak on a playing field. In a random review of application records at schools that say they don't use pesticides, the Gazette found that schools are staying true to their word and are rarely using pesticides.

"We're a proactive community and a proactive school system," said Ron Bohonowicz, the Amherst schools director of facilities and maintenance. No public schools in Amherst use pesticides. "We make a conscious effort to keep pesticide use as low as possible for the safety of our students, staff and the public."

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Monsanto invests \$29 million in biological pesticide venture



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NEW YORK • Alnylam Pharmaceuticals and Monsanto are teaming up to develop biological pesticides that use RNA interference technology.

Alnylam develops drugs that use RNA interference technology, or RNAi, to shut down the proteins at the root of a disease or condition. The 10-year collaboration announced Tuesday will expand the offerings of Monsanto's BioDirect technology platform, which uses molecules found in nature to combat viruses, weeds, and insects. Monsanto says biopesticides can complement or replace chemicals.

Alnylam will get \$29.2 million upfront from Monsanto, and \$1.4 million of that total will go to Alnylam's partner Isis Pharmaceuticals Inc. Alnylam can also receive funding for collaborative research. Both Alnylam and Isis will also be eligible for future milestone payments and royalties from sales of any products that are developed.

Alnylam is based in Cambridge, Mass., and it reported \$82.8 million in total revenue in 2011.

Shares of Alnylam Pharmaceuticals Inc. rose 57 cents, or 3.2 percent, to \$18.31 in afternoon trading. Isis, which is based in Carlsbad, Calif., gained 7 cents to \$13.88. Shares of Monsanto Co., based in Creve Coeur, picked up 18 cents to \$86.31.



OregonLive.com

Everything Oregon

Oregon's nurseries use bug-on-bug tactics to protect high-value plants

Published: Saturday, July 28, 2012, 6:00 AM Updated: Saturday, July 28, 2012, 10:03 PM



By **Eric Mortenson, The Oregonian**



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Ross William Hamilton/The Oregonian

John Maurer once sold chemical pesticides, now beneficial insects make up 98 percent of Evergreen Growers Supply's sales.

Oregon's **greenhouse and nursery plants** are like glossy gold, valued at more than \$740 million in 2011 and perennially at the top of the state's most valuable crops. Keeping them healthy, however, has long involved some ugly business with protective suits, backpack sprayers and chemical pesticides.

Not anymore. Increasingly, the state's nurseries are using bug-on-bug biological control: sending insect predators after spider mites, aphids, fungus gnats, whiteflies and other tiny creatures that damage decorative shrubs, trees and flowers.

They're hoping to improve plant health and win public support in the process. Most important, perhaps, they're also saving money.

In Clackamas, John Maurer's **Evergreen Growers Supply** imports beneficial bugs from a British Columbia insectory and distributes them to several hundred nurseries in the Northwest and beyond. Business has doubled in the past five years, to the point that he hired two part-time workers to track and fill 40 to 60 orders a week.

"I used to sell chemicals," Maurer said. He added bugs to his selections in 1994, and they now make up 98 percent of his sales.

Robin Rosetta, an associate professor at **Oregon State University** who helps nurseries with pest management, said bio-control methods are catching on.

"It's novel right now, but it won't be in 10 or 15 years," she said. "We've reached that 100th monkey; some very good nurseries are adopting it and having success."

Nursery managers say the method works. **Monrovia Nursery** in Dayton, one of Oregon's largest, reports pest control savings ranging from 30 to 70 percent, depending on conditions. Though "knock down" sprays are required occasionally when pest populations soar, some sections of the nursery haven't been sprayed in 10 years, said Ron Tuckett, Monrovia's plant protection manager.

At **Heirloom Roses** in St. Paul, 30 acres of roses provide "all you can eat, one-stop shopping for pests," said Kathleen

Baughman, the company's plant health manager.

"We were spraying for spider mites almost every week in the greenhouses," she said. "We spray once every two or three months now."

Doug Koida, co-owner of Koida Greenhouse Inc. in Milwaukie, said using insects reduced his pest control cost in poinsettias about 50 to 70 percent, while breaking even compared with pesticide use on other plants he grows.

"We have to be conscious of our impact on the world, so I like to use beneficial insects when I can," he said.

No place to hide



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Ross William Hamilton/The Oregonian

Aphid-hunting midges await release at a greenhouse. Nursery managers say using bio-controls allows them to reduce pesticide use.

Nursery managers say cost reduction is only one consideration. Tuckett, of Monrovia, said sprays often don't reach pests hiding on the underside of leaves, but predators seek them out.

"The real benefit is plant quality," he said. "It used to be we would spray every couple of weeks for mites, but we'd still get some defoliation, or blotches. It just didn't look good."

Using insects decreases employees' exposure to potentially harmful chemicals, and the public approves as well, he said.

"When you apply chemicals, not too many people look at you with a friendly face," Tuckett said.

Using bio-control methods to control pests isn't new, but the practice largely disappeared after World War II with the advent of powerful chemical pesticides such as DDT, which was banned in 1972.

"We're rediscovering what everybody used to know," Tuckett said. "It's almost embarrassing how simple it was."

"Nobody likes to spray," said Baughman, of Heirloom Roses. "Not controlling pests is not an option; that's why we're really happy the industry has given us a much more sustainable avenue."

Sustainable it may be, but it's warfare at the magnifying-glass level. Nursery workers deploy predators by shaking them from trays or from plastic jugs that can hold up to 25,000 bugs. Some, like predatory mites, simply spread out

and start eating. Others are like bizarre special ops forces: A parasitic wasp called *Encarsia formosa* lays its eggs inside the eggs of whiteflies. The wasp develops inside the host egg, killing it before emerging as a winged adult.

Though it's primarily nurseries that have adopted bio-control methods so far, fruit and vegetable farmers are not far behind.

Stink bug

Farmers and researchers hope bio-control works against the **brown marmorated stink bug**, an invasive, highly destructive pest with a wide appetite for fruit, vegetables and trees.



Discovered by chance at a Portland home in 2004, the stink bug has since been found in Hood River and Jackson counties, home to high-value fruit orchards. A 2010 outbreak in Pennsylvania devastated crops despite heavy pesticide use, said Helmuth Rogg, manager of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's pest prevention program.

"In some places they sprayed every other week, and still lost half their yield," Rogg said.

Apples that appeared fine when put into cold storage after harvest developed damage three weeks later, indicating the bug survived the cold and emerged to eat. "That's scary," Rogg said. "There aren't many tools to keep it in check."

In addition to crop damage, the stink bugs could cost growers money in other ways. If the bugs wintered in Oregon-grown Christmas trees bound for Mexico, the load could be quarantined and rejected at the border, Rogg said.

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Christopher
Hedstrom/Oregon
State University

Can tiny wasps control
brown marmorated stink
bugs?

Another parasitic wasp looks to be the best hope. It lays its eggs inside the stink bug's eggs, killing them. It's a natural enemy of the stink bugs in Japan, China and South Korea, but using a non-native insect to attack another invasive poses its own set of problems.

State and federal agriculture researchers, teaming with Oregon State University, are raising the stink bugs and wasps in quarantined labs and testing whether the wasps attack the bad bugs while leaving beneficial insects alone.

Results in controlled conditions are promising: The tiny wasps are wiping the lab floor with stink bugs. But it will be several years before researchers can release them outside.

"And rightfully so," Rogg said, "because we have to be really sure it will not affect our native species."

Maurer, the Clackamas bug distributor, said the public is increasingly aware and supportive of bio-controls. At trade shows when he first started, incredulous people would stop at his booth and remark, "You're doing what? You're selling bugs? I want to kill them."

"Now we can't stop talking about them," he said.

Oregon's nurseries use bug-on-bug tactics to protect high-value plants

--**Eric Mortenson**

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Pesticide owner banned from business

Graham pleads guilty to charges in exchange for the lifetime restriction

Updated 8:30 p.m., Wednesday, August 15, 2012

NEW SCOTLAND (NEW YORK) — A Schenectady man has been banned from ever owning or operating a pest control business after pleading guilty last month to spraying pesticides without a license, according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Richard W. Graham, who has been working under the name of Graham Pest Control, agreed to the lifetime ban under an agreement reached with DEC. Graham also pleaded guilty on July 26 in New Scotland Town Court to two misdemeanors — applying restricted-use pesticides without a pesticide applicator certification and without a business registration.

He also paid a \$5,000 fine. Graham admitted that he used the pesticides in August 2011 on Mason Lane in the town of New Scotland. This was after his state registration expired in November 2010, and after his business registration was revoked in May 2011.

Each charge carried a potential penalty of up to a year in jail and up to a \$5,000 fine for each day of the violation.

DEC Law Enforcement Major Scott Florence said charges against Graham stemmed from an "undercover sting" done by the DEC Bureau of Environmental Crimes and staffers within the department's pesticide bureau.

— *Brian Nearing*

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Rob Olson Accidentally Destroys Huge Minnesota Lawn With Weed And Grass Killer

Posted: 07/16/2012 11:42 am Updated: 07/16/2012 11:43 am



You *really* have to [read that fine print](#).

[Rob Olson](#) of Lake Elmo, Minn. just wanted to get rid of the weeds, but he accidentally destroyed his 40,000-square-foot lawn by covering it with an herbicide that kills grass too, according to KARE.

Now, Olson's grass is completely lifeless and he's upset the weed-control product wasn't more clearly labeled.

"I think the packaging should say right on it, this will kill your lawn," Olson told KARE.

Ferti-lome brand weed killer does warn buyers not to use on lawns or plants, but it does so in a packet attached to the back of the bottle.

Olson's lawn is the venue for the annual "[Breathe Easy Music Fest](#)," but with his yard in danger of turning to dust, Olson cancelled this year's event, which is a fundraiser for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Olson's boys, AJ and Jake, both suffer from the disease.

From the Breathe Easy site:

Immediate and aggressive treatment saved AJ's life and has been keeping both AJ and Jake healthy. This would not be possible without the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and people like you making donations.

You can still make a donation [to the foundation here](#).

Olson's story didn't elicit much sympathy from Ebaum's World, [who slapped this headline](#) on the KARE piece: "Lawn Care 101, read ALL the directions before applying. That is all."

[Hat tip: Fark](#)

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