

June 15, 2006

Mr. Robert Nardelli
CEO
Home Depot, Inc.
2455 Paces Ferry Road
Atlanta, GA 30339

public_relations@homedepot.com

Dear Mr. Nardelli,

Citizens across Canada, as well as the US, are becoming increasingly aware of the hazards of pesticides and the switch from toxic to non-toxic lawn products has begun. As a leader in the home and garden market, Home Depot should be offering its customers a wider selection of natural, non-toxic lawn products and training your employees on how to advise customers on natural lawn care. Consistent with your sustainability policy, Home Depot should immediately reconsider the sale of weed and feed products that broadcast pesticides throughout an entire lawn and contribute greatly to water pollution. Weed and feed products are in opposition to sound land care management principles and pose hazards both to people and the environment. It would also be a great asset if natural products carried by your stores would be set up separately to reduce container and product contamination by adjacent chemical products.

As you are undoubtedly aware, organic food production and sales, which many said would never capture much of the market, is today more an \$11 billion industry and the demand continues to grow daily. We believe the growth in demand for non-synthetic, chemical-free organic foods will soon be matched by a growth in the sale of organic/natural lawn care products and services. Recent surveys show more than half of all households, some 40 million, are buying or seeking to buy non-toxic, natural alternatives to lawn pesticides. Additional surveys tell us that with a little information about the harm that pesticides can do to children, families, pets, wildlife, drinking water and soil, demand for these alternative products will rise substantially. Yet, major retailers are barely touching this emerging market.

Of 30 U.S. commonly used lawn pesticides 14 are 'probable' or 'possible' carcinogens, the same amount are linked to birth defects, 18 are linked to reproductive problems, 20 to liver or kidney damage, and 18 to neurotoxicity. (I have to use U.S. data because I have been unable to figure out the total list of Canadian products that can be used on lawns from PMRA web site). The impact of these chemicals on beneficial organisms such as bees, earthworms, birds and fish is equally alarming. If given a choice between a potential cancer-causing, fish-killing poison to get rid of weeds and a natural biological or bacterial based product, many more consumers would choose to go natural.

Currently 113 Canadian municipalities have pesticide bylaws protecting over 1/3 of the Canadian population from cosmetic use of pesticides. Furthermore, while most licensed reduced-risk products are available in eastern Canada, it is not the case West of Ontario. The most common question asked at my Saskatchewan organic gardening workshops is: "Where can I buy product x,y,z, locally?" I don't have an answer other than telling people to let retailers know what products they are interested in purchasing.

SNAP hopes that you will take these concerns seriously and increase the selection of low toxicity pesticide products in your stores, especially in Saskatchewan. We are interested in discussing this matter further with Home Depot's Saskatchewan or Prairie Manager.

Paule Hjertaas,

President and spokesperson of the Saskatchewan Network for Alternatives to Pesticides Inc,
(SNAP)
15 Olson Place,
Regina, SK,
S4S 2J6

Tel (306) 584-2835
dp.hjertaas@sasktel.net

Home Depot Forced To Pay Settlement In Connecticut

(Beyond Pesticides, June 16, 2006) In a settlement reached on Wednesday, Home Depot agreed to pay nearly half a million dollars to the state of Connecticut for “numerous violations of environmental regulations” including improper pesticide disposal. The settlement negotiations, according to the [Boston Globe](#), have been ongoing since 2004. The [Atlanta Business Chronicle](#) noted that 13 stores failed to comply with various hazardous waste, pesticide, and storm water management programs, as well as the storage and treatment of the hazardous products themselves. The stores disobeying state regulations were in North Haven, Berlin, Norwalk, Fairfield, Southington, Danbury, West Hartford, Enfield, New Hartford, Lisbon, Derby, Middletown and Waterbury.

Gina McCarthy, the state Environmental Commissioner, announced that Home Depot would pay Connecticut a penalty of \$99,000 for their violation of environmental regulations statewide, as well as providing an additional \$326,000 for a fund to further educate other companies regarding the treatment of such dangerous chemicals. [The Hartford Courant](#) reports that Home Depot must also detail an “environmental management system” to forestall future difficulties. Finally, the company must pay for a third-party audit to ensure their obedience to the terms of the settlement.

Curt Johnson, senior attorney for the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, says that Home Depot should be implementing a program for hazardous waste pickup in regards to pesticides and other chemicals being disposed of at their stores. This would entail different dumpsters for these products that would be picked up by a hazardous waste company and burned at high temperatures, breaking down the chemical bonds.

Home Depot issued a statement assuring the public it was “**committed to compliance**” with the state environmental laws. It is investigating with manufacturers the possibility of stronger bags for these products to prevent tears and spills from occurring. [The Danbury News](#) described the changes Home Depot agreed to make in addition to the monetary terms of the settlement, which include:

- **New training** for employees to educate them in the proper handling and disposal of hazardous materials such as fertilizers, pesticides and pressure treated wood;
- Covering outdoor displays (previously left open and exposed to rain water and weather conditions) to stop chemicals contaminating the water supply;
- Protecting indoor displays to avoid unnecessary tearing of the bags by shopping cars;
- Using stronger bags which will rip less easily;
- Patching holes in bags to contain spills and avoid wasting products by throwing the whole bag away.

Take Action!

Tell Home Depot to not only comply with the law, but to minimize the environmental health and safety impacts of pesticides by carrying safer alternative lawn care products. Copy the following letter and email it to public_relations@homedepot.com

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CEO
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2455 Paces Ferry Road
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