

October 18, 2018 Letter to the Editor of the New Paltz Times

Think Twice about using yard products containing Glyphosate

Glyphosate is a compound in a number of grass and weed-killing products sold in retail garden centers and is the active ingredient in Roundup, manufactured by the Monsanto Corporation. On August 10th, a California jury found Monsanto, which merged earlier this year with the German pharmaceutical company Bayer AG, liable in a lawsuit and ordered the company to pay \$289 million in damages to an individual who developed a fatal Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma after using Monsanto's Roundup and Ranger Pro herbicides as part of his pest control manager job for a California county school system. As of September 2018, over 8,000 more lawsuits against Monsanto have been filed alleging that Roundup and other glyphosate-based weed killers cause cancer.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the specialized cancer research agency of the World Health Organization, previously classified glyphosate as a probable carcinogen for humans. In contrast, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency have been slower in their assessment of the compound's potential public health and environmental impacts. A number of ecological concerns have also been raised about glyphosate. Researchers have found that honeybees exposed to Roundup exhibited lowered sensitivity to sucrose, leading to a decreased ability to track and find food and pollinate, which could eventually impact agriculture. Ulster County's numerous farms and professional beekeepers may be vulnerable. Glyphosate's adverse impacts on a variety of other wildlife species have also been documented in the scientific literature.

Despite the August 10th ruling against Monsanto, the red flags raised by the World Health Organization, and information contained in scientific journals, products like Roundup remain in use. With this in mind, the Town of New Paltz Environmental Conservation Board (EnCB) investigated the use of glyphosate-containing products by the municipality. We were pleased to learn from the Town Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, Moriello Pool management, and the New Paltz Central School District (NPCSD) that glyphosate-containing products like Roundup are not applied on any of these properties. Chemical use is in fact banned on school district property under New York State Education law.

The EnCB recommends that residential consumers take a precautionary approach in selecting lawn and garden-care products. Let store managers know that you are looking for environmentally sound products with natural ingredients that do not contain glyphosate. If you are a do-it-yourselfer (DIY), there are some tried-and-true weed killer recipes. Local resident Stephen Callahan recommends a natural weed control recipe consisting of one gallon of white vinegar, two cups multi-purpose epsom salts and ¼ cup regular Blue Dawn dish soap (to be dispensed in a sprayer). In addition to creating a safer, highly effective herbicide, Callahan's three-ingredient recipe costs less to make than the price of commercially marketed herbicides. Additional DIY non-toxic ways to control weeds can be found at:

<https://www.momsacrossamerica.com/10-alternatives-to-roundup>.

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Finally, if you contract with a commercial landscaping company, talk with them about alternative methods for weed control in your yard.

A healthy and attractive property is attainable without Roundup.

Sincerely,

The Town Of New Paltz Environmental Conservation Board