

Why Garden Green? Gardening and the Environment

Home lawns in the U.S. cover approximately 30 million acres, an area larger than Maryland, Massachusetts and New Hampshire combined. (Natural Landscapes Project)

According to the EPA estimates, homeowners apply an estimated 134 million pounds of herbicide and insecticide active ingredients per year to their gardens and lawns.

Homeowners use up to 10 times more chemical pesticides per acre on their lawns than farmers use on crops. (www.ehhi.org – Attributed to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Recent studies of major rivers and streams documented that 96 percent of all fish sampled, 100 percent of all surface waters, and 33 percent of aquifers contained one or more pesticides at detectable levels. (EPA)

“Excess fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides from agricultural lands and residential areas” are listed among the top five causes of nonpoint source pollution (coming from a variety of sources). States report that nonpoint source pollution is the leading remaining cause of water quality problems. . . .we know that these pollutants have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation, fisheries, and wildlife. (Defenders of Wildlife)

A recent University of Washington (2002) study found that 109 out of 110 urban and suburban children had pesticides, which includes weed and bug killers, in their urine samples. (Natural Landscapes Project)

Nationwide, landscape irrigation is estimated to account for roughly one-third of all residential water use, totaling more than 7 billion gallons per day. (Defenders of Wildlife)

Now, more than 60 percent of water pollution comes from things like cars leaking oil, fertilizers from farms and gardens, and failing septic tanks. (www.psat.wa.gov)

Lawn and garden pesticides (weed, bug and fungus killers) were found in all of the 12 stream study sites in Puget Sound watersheds. In the Puget Sound Basin, more pounds of pesticides were applied in urban than in agricultural areas. (USGS Report 1997)

About a dozen pesticides approved for backyard use have caused documented die-offs of birds. (www.Audubon.org)