

May 3, 2001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

GROW SAFELY THIS SPRING! – Add Integrated Pest Management to your gardening tools!

Toronto - After a long and snowy winter gardeners of every stripe are eager to dig into their work. With a renewed interest in gardening – especially with Baby Boomers – it has become a creative and satisfying hobby for millions of Canadians. Many homeowners are already contemplating the simple pleasures of a backyard BBQ in July or the time-honoured tradition of porch sitting in August. So while lawn owners may be looking at the dull brown patches of lawn now, most have visions of a healthy and green lawn to come, that will help to cool the summer's heat and provide a welcome relief to the concrete pavements and asphalt roads of everyday living.

Not every guest to the lawns and gardens of Canadians will be welcome. Grubs, chinch bugs, ants, hornets, slugs and mosquitoes as well as blight, black spot clover and mildew may come visiting but gardeners definitely won't be greeting them with open arms.

Statistics Canada reported in 1999 that 6.4 million Canadians have a lawn or garden. An Angus Reid poll in the same year reported that about 2/3 of Canadians homeowners with lawns and gardens reported using herbicides and insecticides during the previous year to prevent or cure damage caused by plants or insects and to protect their properties.

(more)

Pesticides for home and consumer use in Canada are stringently regulated by Health Canada through the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). The Agency ensures that extensive scientific research, development and product testing is undertaken before a pesticide is approved by Health Canada in order to ensure the safety and effectiveness for humans and pets of each product when properly applied.

Broadly defined, a pesticide is a chemical or natural substance used to control insects, the spread of disease, weeds, fungi and other “pests” on plants, fruits, vegetables, animals and buildings including those in your house and garage. Fungicides, herbicides, sanitizers, rodenticides, miticides and insecticides are all pesticides. In particular, herbicides control broadleaf weeds such as the ragweed that causes allergies.

The key to healthy green spaces for homeowners is to practice of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM is a system of managing pest problems by putting the emphasis on prevention of the circumstances that lead to pest infestations by doing such things as watering, using proper mowing techniques, planting hardy species of plants, spot spraying and dethatching. (taking the dead grass off the lawn). When a homeowner identifies a pest problem that needs more assertive or preventative action (i.e., pretreatment to eliminate a severe infestation based on history,) the homeowner considers all options to address the problem. Pesticides play an important role in Integrated Pest Management because they protect and ensure the health of plants and prevent the devastation of property.

more)

Kimberley Bates, Executive Director of the Urban Pest Management Council (UPMC) in Toronto, encourages people who use pesticides to make sure they use the right solution for the right reasons and at the right time. If applied according to label directions, pesticides are effective and pose little risk to the user.

“The first step is to become an educated consumer and to learn how pesticides fit into an Integrated Pest Management program. If you use pesticides as part of the care and treatment of your home, lawn and garden, find the right product and use only what you need. Get the product information and then take the time to read and follow the directions on the labels carefully. Ask your local retailer for advice,” says Ms. Bates.

“People can trust pesticides for their effectiveness if they use them properly. Treat pesticides with respect as you would any household cleaning supply or over-the-counter headache or cold medication,” says Ms Bates. “Canadians can take advantage of all the benefits of healthy green spaces by following a few simple steps when faced with a gardening problem. First, determine the problem and be specific when describing it to your local retailer. Second, choose the right solution. There are different formulations available: some are pre-mixed and ready to use, and some are not. Pesticides should not be mixed unless the label states that this can be done. Thirdly, read the label carefully and follow the directions. And finally, store all pesticides in their original containers in a safe cool and dry place. It’s as simple as 1 – 2 – 3.”

(more)

The Urban Pest Management Council of Canada (UPMC) represents the manufacturers, formulators, distributors and allied associations of specialty pest management products for consumer and professional markets. The Council is dedicated to the protection of community health and the environment.

-30-

For further information, or to speak with the UPMC Executive Director

please call: Kimberley Bates
 (416) 622-9771 ext. 229
 batesk@cropro.org