

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Toronto.... If you are a gardener, property owner, homeowner, or parent with a child in a sports league, chances are that a Supreme Court decision rendered today, notes Executive Director of the Urban Pest Management Council of Canada, Kimberley Bates, could affect you.

The case concerns two pesticide companies who applied pesticides on behalf of their customers, but the decision isn't about pesticides. It's about the ability of Canadians to make their own decisions about what is right for their families and their properties.

"While the Court did not support a total ban on pesticide use," notes Bates, "it said that even with two levels of government regulation, municipalities have the right to ban an activity for esthetic reasons. Since the definition of esthetic has not been scientifically established, this could vary from one municipality to the next. The result could be chaos and a patchwork of municipal by-laws across the country. It will be costly to hire and train staff. With only a sign separating many municipalities, banning activities for esthetic reasons will be virtually impossible to enforce.

Statistics Canada reported in 1999 that 6.4 million Canadians have a lawn or garden. An Angus Reid (now Ipsos 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.

"As the organization representing producers of home and garden products for the prevention of disease and devastation we are deeply concerned about the impact of this judgment. We remain committed to public education and to protection of health and the environment. A lot of Canadians will also have concerns about this decision. Governments at all levels will need to study this judgment to see how it affects them. We will be doing our best to make sure that we respond to their questions and to working with them to promote balanced solutions.

"In our work with many Canadian municipalities, increased public education and the implementation of Integrated Pest Management programs have proved to be a better approach to avoiding disease and devastation and ensuring that pesticides are not misused or overused."

IPM programs emphasize preventing the circumstances that lead to garden and lawn problems 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 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.

“Putting the emphasis on avoiding problems by getting as much information as possible before applying a remedy, using the right product at the right time, for the right reasons, - and not a ban or a patchwork of regulation, would best protect all Canadians,” says Bates.

The gardening industry continues to be an active participant in the development of the federal government’s Healthy Lawns Strategy that promotes a national, consistent approach to Integrated Pest Management, and that also recognizes the rights of Canadian to make their own choices for their families, properties and their homes.

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.

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