

# Spreading the Word, Not Chemicals

## Door-hanger promotes safe solutions for lawn care

It's not always easy to talk to people about pesticides. It can be especially awkward when the time you think of it most is right at the moment that your neighbor has a sprayer in his hand or a ChemLawn truck in the driveway. The new *Safe Lawn Door-Hanger* can help you spread the word about lawn pesticides and alternatives with minimal confrontation. Use it as an icebreaker for conversation or just hang it on the front door or other visible spot of the homes you know or suspect use pesticides. Let us, or your participating local environmental group, do the rest!

The door-hanger can be the first step to building awareness about the hazards of pesticides in your neighborhood, or a follow-up if you have already been educating your neighbors. Talking with neighbors about natural lawn care or pesticide problems can also be effective.

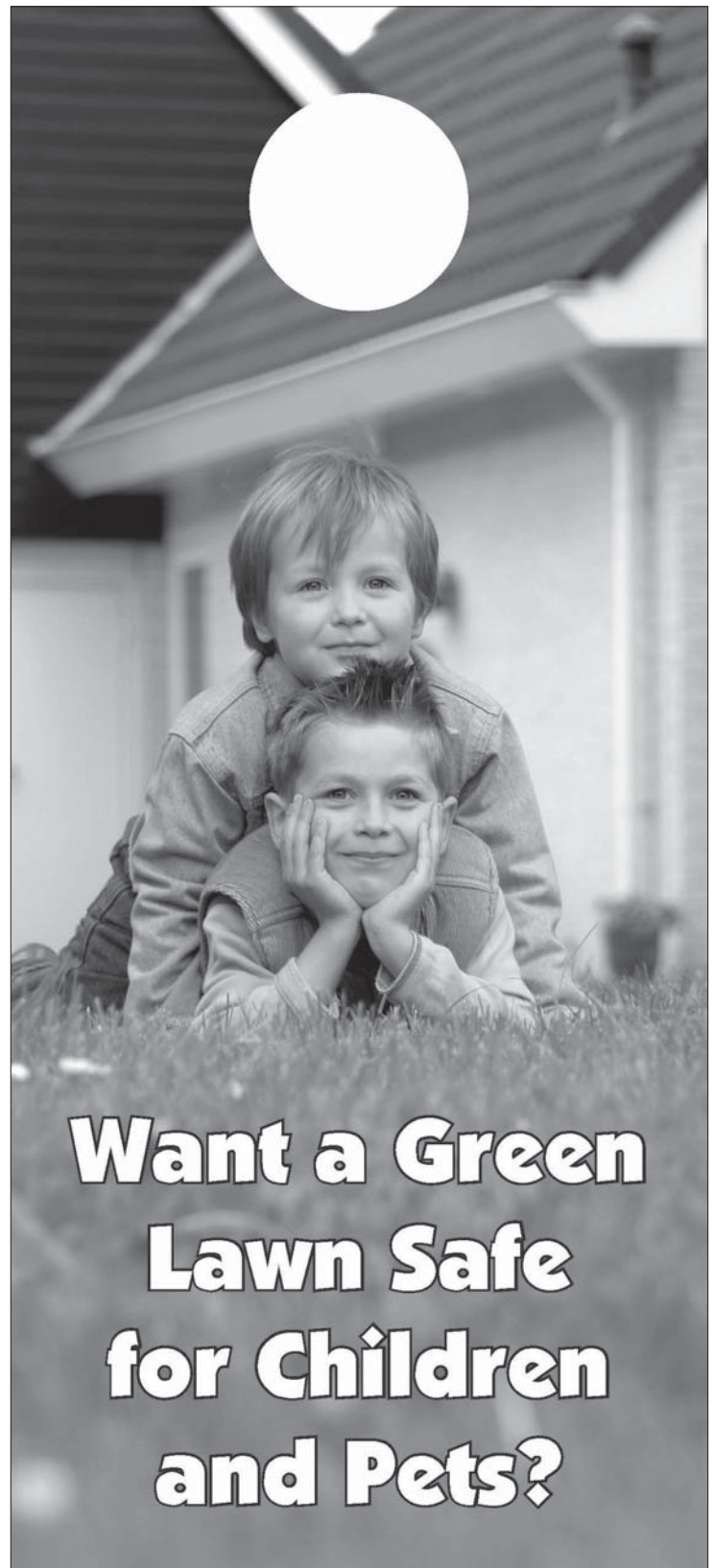
### Spread the word

It is safe to assume that most people do not like the idea behind those little yellow flags on lawns indicating that toxic chemicals have been applied. But many shrug with a sense of powerlessness, thinking that it is what they have to do if they want a lush, green lawn. It is precisely this misperception that the chemical industry has been promoting since the 1950's.

What are some reasons people do not make the switch to natural, chemical-free lawn care? The most obvious reason is that most people do not realize the real dangers pesticides pose to children, animals and the environment. Additionally, people do not know that there are viable alternatives and that a green, healthy lawn can be achieved without pesticides.

People place a tremendous amount of faith in the regulatory system. They figure that if pesticides are sold in local stores and registered by the EPA, then they must be safe. Consumer surveys in the U.S. and Canada show that the more people know about the harmful effects of pesticides the less likely they are to use them. But hazard information is not enough. Surveys also reveal that a major factor influencing the purchase of natural products is how convinced a person is that the product actually works.

These surveys affirm that to be most effective in communicating about natural lawn care, the objective should be to: (1) Educate about the health and environmental impacts of pesticides and the limitations of EPA in protecting children, pets or the general public; (2) Offer preventive techniques or natural products and provide contacts where one can get more information; and, (3) Encourage people to believe that their efforts can indeed make a difference.



**Want a Green  
Lawn Safe  
for Children  
and Pets?**

**Most people do not realize the real dangers pesticides pose to children, animals and the environment. Additionally, people do not know that there are viable alternatives...**

**You Don't Need to Use Toxic Lawn Chemicals To Have a Safe and Healthy Green Lawn**

It's never too late to have a naturally green lawn. Spring, Summer or Fall, there are simple steps you can take to prevent weeds, nurture soil, and never use dangerous lawn pesticides. It's worth it!

For a FREE packet on Child-Safe Lawn Care call 202-543-540 or visit [www.pesticidefreelawns.org](http://www.pesticidefreelawns.org)

**Scientific Studies Show Lawn Pesticides Can:**

- ⇒ Increase the risks of cancer and asthma in children.
- ⇒ Poison dogs and increase their risk of cancer.
- ⇒ Kill fish and pollute drinking water.
- ⇒ Be tracked indoors and contaminate homes.

Some helpful tips on talking about lawn pesticides include:

- **Emphasize the human health hazards** such as cancer, asthma, developmental disorders and other problems, particularly to children, the unborn, the elderly and the ill.
- **Stress cost-savings** of employing a few simple prevention techniques coupled with natural remedies that can replace the need for toxic pesticides.
- **Use reasonable language** with an even tone of voice that sounds more informative and solution-oriented than demanding, trying not to put the person on the defensive.
- **Focus your energy** toward those most inclined to show interest, namely women, particularly those with children or pets, and residents that drive hybrid cars, recycle, or exhibit other environmental concerns.
- **Be patient but persistent** with neighbors, as some people need several different types of prompting before they actually begin to change their behavior.

## Counter Misinformation

Dispelling the myth that pesticides are safe is not done in a vacuum. The chemical industry is stepping up its campaign with misleading information. “Greenwashing,” the act of giving a positive public image to environmentally unsound practices, is more rampant than ever in the chemical lawn industry.

The latest greenwashing campaign of the industry's front group, Project Evergreen, claims “extremists” are trying to take away people's lawns and uses the heart-tugging slogan, “It's more than a landscape – It's a lifescape.” The group even goes as far as saying that lawns treated with pesticides and chemical fertilizers actually make rivers and streams *healthier*. Another popular ad features a photo of two young children sitting on a manicured lawn next to a book entitled “Because Green Matters.” The ad asks, “Who's telling your story?” Free brochures containing this type of propaganda are given to landscapers and may be available soon in most stores where pesticides are sold.

In keeping with its deceptive nature, the “green” industry, as the chemical lawn care industry calls itself, rarely uses the word *pesticides* in its advertising, but words like “green” and “environmental benefits” are plenty.

*A similar version of the Safe Lawn Door-Hanger in full color will be available soon. Contact Beyond Pesticides, [info@beyondpesticides.org](mailto:info@beyondpesticides.org) or 202-543-5450, for copies.*