



Five Reasons Not to Use *Weed and Feed*

#1

***Weed and Feed* Products Threaten Human Health, and are Especially Dangerous For Children**

A growing body of scientific evidence continues to confirm the widespread health effects of *Weed and Feed* products. 2,4-D, the pesticide in most *Weed and Feed* products, is a neurotoxicant and contains half the ingredients in Agent Orange. Studies show that exposure to 2,4-D is associated with neurological disorders, reproductive problems, kidney/liver damage, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and other cancers, and disruption of the endocrine (hormonal) system.¹ Children are especially at risk for increased exposure to *Weed and Feed* since they play on lawns for extended periods of time and put their hands and other objects into their mouths.² In general, children are most susceptible than adults to pesticides because they take in more chemicals relative to their body weight than adults and they have developing organ systems that are more vulnerable and less able to detoxify chemicals.³ Endocrine disruptors are of particular concern for children because, depending on timing, minute doses can effect the function of cells and tissues and cause problems during critical growth stages. Disruption of the endocrine system is associated with a range of developmental problems including deficient brain function, learning disabilities, and other problems.

Exposure to herbicides such as 2,4-D is not limited to the outdoors. Studies have shown that lawn chemicals drift and are tracked indoors where they may remain in carpets and on surfaces for up to a year when not exposed to direct sunlight.⁴ A single turf application of 2,4-D can remain inside the home at exposure levels ten times higher than pre-application exposures.⁵ In a 2003 study of indoor air toxins, 2,4-D was detected in the dust of 63% of sampled houses.⁶

#2

***Weed and Feed* Hurts Dogs and Wildlife**

2,4-D has been shown to have negative impacts on a number of animals. Studies have found that dogs whose owners use 2,4-D lawn products are twice as likely to develop canine malignant lymphoma.⁷ The latest EPA assessment of 2,4-D acknowledges the susceptibility of dogs to poisoning by 2,4-D and other lawn pesticides but does not propose any label warnings to users.⁸ Wildlife is also negatively affected by *Weed and Feed*. Exposure to 2,4-D has shown to reduce hatching success and cause birth defects in birds.⁹ Studies also show 2,4-D products to be toxic to earthworms that are vital to healthy soil, and to have negative impacts on beneficial insects, such as honeybees, predatory beetles, and ladybugs.^{10,11}

<p>#3</p>	<p><i>Weed and Feed Pollutes Drinking Water Sources</i></p> <p>Since <i>Weed and Feed</i> combines a fertilizer and an herbicide, it directs the user to spread the herbicide throughout the lawn instead of just where weeds are present. Most users are believed to overuse <i>Weed and Feed</i> products, not realizing that it actually contains a pesticide or just by thinking that more is better. This is exacerbated by the fact that only around half of households actually read and follow the label carefully when using pesticides and fertilizers.¹² Since 2,4-D is highly mobile in soil¹³ the overuse of <i>Weed and Feed</i> products leads to runoff that contaminates groundwater and watersheds. Studies by the U.S. Geological Survey show 2,4-D is the number one herbicide most frequently detected in streams and shallow ground water throughout the country from home and garden use.¹⁴ 2,4-D has also been detected in ground water in at least five states and Canada.¹⁵ Partially due to the problem of overuse and water contamination, the Canadian Medical Association passed a resolution calling for the ban of <i>Weed and Feed</i> products.¹⁶</p>
<p>#4</p>	<p><i>Local Governments Are Calling For a Ban on Weed and Feed</i></p> <p>As part of EPA's assessment of 2,4-D for reregistration in March 2005, the public was able to submit comments. Over 1000 letters calling for the cancellation of <i>Weed and Feed</i> products were received by the agency including some from local governments and state and local agencies such as Seattle Public Utilities, the California Regional Water Quality Board, Clark County(Washington), and King County(Washington).¹⁷</p>
<p>#5</p>	<p><i>We Don't Need Weed and Feed</i></p> <p><i>Weed and Feed</i> is not an effective solution to weed maintenance. It can actually damage the health of lawns by harming microorganisms, beneficial insects, and earthworms that are essential to maintaining healthy soil and therefore, healthy turf. Typically, weeds cover a small fraction of lawn area, and any herbicide applied to weed-free areas is wasted. Even if a lawn contains as much as 50% weeds, then half of the herbicide is unnecessary and contributes to runoff and health risk without providing any benefit. There is no need to expose the public to this toxic chemical in the water, the air and the soil when safe and effective alternatives exist. Examples of alternatives to 2,4-D include corn gluten as a safe pre-emergent general herbicide, vinegar to selectively kill certain weeds, weeder machines that simply use hot water or heat, long handled mechanical weed pullers, and pulling out weeds by hand. Natural organic fertilizers or slow-release fertilizers help to maintain a healthy lawn.</p>



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