

## Resources

### **Beyond Pesticides**

202-543-5450  
[beyondpesticides.org](http://beyondpesticides.org)

Advocates safe, healthy, living lawns and landscapes with the use of organic and least toxic practices and products

### **Environment and Human Health, Inc.**

[ehhi.org](http://ehhi.org)  
Promotes human health through research, education, and public policy

### **National Pesticide Information Center**

800-858-7378  
[npic.orst.edu](http://npic.orst.edu)  
Provides objective, science-based information about pesticides and pesticide-related topics to enable people to make informed decisions about pesticides and their use

### **Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides**

541-344-5044  
[pesticide.org](http://pesticide.org)  
Protects the health of people and the environment by advancing alternatives to pesticides

### **Pesticide Action Network North America**

415-981-1771  
[panna.org](http://panna.org)  
Works to replace pesticide use with ecologically sound and socially just alternatives by linking local and international groups into an international citizens' action network

PLEASE NOTE: PRC does not endorse or recommend any of the groups or organizations listed in this brochure. Individuals seeking information or services from them should fully research their qualifications and capabilities as related to their needs.

## In Partnership With

**Allegheny County Health Department**  
[achd.net/recycling](http://achd.net/recycling)

**Armstrong County Recycling Center**  
[co.armstrong.pa.us/recycling](http://co.armstrong.pa.us/recycling)

**Beaver County Department of Waste Management**  
[beavercountypa.gov/Depts/WasteMgmt](http://beavercountypa.gov/Depts/WasteMgmt)

**Cambria County Solid Waste Authority**  
[cambriarecycles.org](http://cambriarecycles.org)

**Washington County Planning Commission**  
[co.washington.pa.us/177/recycling](http://co.washington.pa.us/177/recycling)

**PA DEP Recycling Hotline**  
800-346-4242

**OUR MISSION:** To lead and promote individual and collective actions to preserve Pennsylvania's environmental resources for each generation.



Working to protect the environment since 1939

**PRC WEST** 64 South 14th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

**PRC EAST** 3606 Providence Road, Newtown Square, PA 19073

[www.prc.org](http://www.prc.org)

@PRC\_Litterbug   @prc.org

# Safe & Healthy

## Lawn Care



**A guide to protecting your family from lawn and garden chemicals**



**Look around your home and you may discover as much as 100 pounds of “household hazardous waste” (HHW) stored in your basement, garage, kitchen, bathroom, and garden shed.**

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, an average home can easily accumulate this amount of cleaners, pesticides, paints, automotive fluids, and other products containing hazardous components. While such products are safe to use if proper precautions are taken, problems generally arise when you use, store, or dispose of products improperly.

#### **Manage your HHW responsibly:**

**Shopping** – Purchase the least toxic product available and estimate the quantity in advance to avoid leftover toxic materials.

**Storage** – Label all containers and keep all chemicals out of the reach of children and pets.

**Nontoxic Alternatives** – Make safe cleaning solutions at home from products such as baking soda, borax, and vinegar.

**Collection Events** – Gather products and drop off at a household chemical collection event.

**All pesticides are inherently poisonous, and pesticide use cannot be made completely safe.**



### **Did you know...**

- All pesticides are poisons, and pesticide use cannot be made completely safe. Pesticides must be registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Please note that registration does not guarantee that the chemicals have been tested for human health effects.
- Pesticide residue remains on grass even when dry. Lawn pesticides can enter a body through the mouth, nose, eyes, and skin.
- Exposure to garden pesticides can drastically increase the risk of childhood leukemia and is linked to birth defects and certain types of cancer.
- According to the ASPCA, insect repellents that contain “DEET” can cause fatal neurological damage to dogs and cats.
- Nitrogen, phosphorus, and ammonia — all found in many fertilizers — contaminate water causing algal blooms, elevated toxins levels in waterways, and mass die-offs of fish and other aquatic life.
- Poison control centers receive approximately one call every 13 seconds concerning a suspected or actual human poisoning or exposure. More than 90% of these exposures occur in or around the home.

## **TOP TIPS for Safe Lawn and Garden Care**

- 1. Dispose of Excess Toxic Materials**  
Call the PA DEP Recycling Hotline at 800-346-4242 to learn about drop-off locations near you.
- 2. Feed the Soil**  
Cultivate your lawn and garden by raking an inch of compost into the surface every spring and fall. Set your lawn mower to the highest setting; grass should be 3-4 inches high, which shades roots, conserves moisture, and reduces weeds.
- 3. Mow Smarter**  
Leave grass clippings on the lawn to provide nitrogen and decrease by half the amount of commercial fertilizer required.
- 4. Reseed Annually**  
Seed your lawn in late summer or fall with native grasses. Thick turf effectively controls weeds.
- 5. Control Pests Naturally**  
Control common pests with applications of beneficial nematodes. Treat your lawn with organic corn gluten, which kills weed seeds and seedlings, and apply to established lawns in early spring.
- 6. Go Native**  
Consider non-traditional grasses that may thrive better than traditional grasses.
- 7. Use Nontoxic Alternatives**  
Purchase nontoxic alternative products or make your own at home from materials such as baking soda and vinegar.
- 8. Use Adequate Ventilation**  
Be aware of the dangers of toxic fumes when using HHW in enclosed spaces such as garages and garden sheds.
- 9. Manage Materials Responsibly When Moving**  
Do not leave any HHW behind in your old home. To find safe disposal options near you, call the PA DEP Recycling Hotline at 800-346-4242.

#### **In case of accidental poisoning:**

##### **Pittsburgh Poison Center**

412-681-6669 or 800-222-1222  
24 hours/day, 7 days/week

#### **Info about collection events:**

**Pennsylvania Resources Council**  
prc.org

#### **Info about proper disposal:**

**PA DEP Recycling Hotline**  
800-346-4242

