



Health Department  
**INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM**  
Office of the Commissioner

**TO:** Regional Chairman and Members of Regional Council

**FROM:** Bob Nosal, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health

**DATE:** August 21, 2007

**RE:** **Updates: 2007 Pesticide Education & Outreach Activities**

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This memo is intended to provide an update to Council on the recent community outreach activities in relation to pesticides and Naturally Green education.

The *Partners for Naturally Green* is a partnership that includes staff from Halton Region, along with staff from the City of Burlington, the Towns of Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills, Landscape Ontario, and the Organic Landscape Alliance. This group is dedicated to increasing awareness and educating the public about decreasing pesticide use and employing alternative methods to creating healthy lawns and gardens.

For 2007, this inter-municipal group has funds in the amount of \$50,000 as approved in this year's budget for pesticide reduction awareness. The cost share is as follows: \$20,000 (Halton Region), \$10,000 (Burlington), \$10,000 (Oakville), \$5000 (Milton), and \$5000 (Halton Hills).

The following is an update on the results of recent activities sponsored by the *Partners for Naturally Green* and led by the Region's staff in the Health Department.

### **Healthy Lawns, Healthy Gardens**

In Fall 2006, Halton participated in a pilot project with Health Canada and Landscape Ontario presenting a Healthy Lawns, Healthy Gardens seminar to the public. The interactive session was part of a ten event series across the province led by local celebrities from HGTV's *One Garden, Two Looks*. The purpose of the event was to motivate and provide residents with information on how to implement healthy lawn/garden practices, therefore reducing the need for pesticides.

Building on the success of the pilot, the Region organized two additional *Healthy Lawns, Healthy Gardens* seminars for the spring of 2007. The first one was convened on March 28<sup>th</sup> in Oakville and the second one on May 9<sup>th</sup> in Milton. These events were a great success and were attended by 150 residents. The March session was taped by Cogeco cable and syndicated across the region. The *Home & Garden TV* expert was superb in delivering the naturally green message, specifically looking to the future of gardening - emphasizing the importance of good cultural practices, reducing reliance on pesticides, and involving children in gardening.

### **Pesticide Exchange**

Since 2003, the *Partners for Naturally Green* have sponsored a Pesticide Exchange event. Each year, the Region's staff organize these events in two locations in the Region, one at the Halton Waste Management Site in Milton, and the second one in Halton Hills, Oakville, or Burlington (alternating each year).

This year, the Pesticide Exchange was held on Saturday, June 9, 2007 at the Household Hazardous Waste Depot (at the Halton Waste Management Site in Milton), and Saturday, June 23, 2007 at Sheridan College in Oakville. Naturally Green members assisted with the event, which encourages residents to bring their old or unused pesticides (for safe disposal) in exchange for information on healthy lawn maintenance and free garden care giveaways. Giveaways included: backyard composters, recycling bins, gardening gloves, pesticide-free trial size products and much more. This year alone, there were 1339 vehicles participating in the event, with about 1620 litres of pesticides diverted from the landfill. This has been the highest recorded amount since the event's inception in 2003. For your information, attached is the Pesticide Exchange Event Results Summary from 2003 - 2007.

### **Additional Naturally Green Activities for 2007**

#### **Outdoor Plaques**

In the fall 2006, the *Partners for Naturally Green* produced and sited three Naturally Green outdoor plaques in the Region in recognition of responsible grounds maintenance. These sites included: the Halton Millennium Garden (Halton Regional Centre, Oakville), Post Inn Village (Oakville), and Creek Way Village (Burlington). Plans are underway to produce four additional plaques recognizing other sites in Halton that are taking a lead in responsible grounds maintenance, particularly sites in the north in Milton and Halton Hills. The additional plaques are slated for installation this coming fall.

#### **Updates to Educational Materials**

The *Partners for Naturally Green* are currently engaged in a process to update their pesticide education and outreach materials; this has included a review of the current brochure, website content, and supplementary promotional items that are required for events and distribution to the public. This process will form the basis for a Healthy Lawns kit, consisting of an info-card, brochure, lawn sign, and seasonal calendar. The kits are targeted for completion this Fall. The *Partners for Naturally Green* have also had an opportunity this year to participate in the Halton Landscape Assessment Pilot Program. As part of this program, the Region's Health staff have teamed with the Region's Water Outreach staff to provide Naturally Green information, resources, and pesticide-free products as part of the landscape assessment visits that are conducted by Halton's Landscape Advisor.

Once again, the above events and activities sponsored by the *Partners for Naturally Green* are an excellent opportunity for Health and Planning and Public Works Departments (Waste Management & Environmental Services) to work with its local partners in delivering the Naturally Green program to the Halton community.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Nosal MD FRCPC  
Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health