Reducing the Use of Pesticides on Council Land Scrutiny Review Questionnaire.

Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens.

Please answer the following questions as far as you can. All responses are useful so leave questions unanswered if you need to.

1. **Does your organisation have a policy about the use of pesticides? If so, please can you share it with us?**

The Tree Wardens and Charles Dickens Community Orchards have always had an unwritten agreement/ policy where we only use natural products to enhance growth and natural methods to control pests and diseases.

So, we would use soapy water to control aphids on trees or industrial vinegar (Acetic acid) to control weeds and use mechanical methods of removing weeds either by hand or with tools.

In some orchards (Marine Court in Southsea) they have introduced ladybirds to control aphids.

2. **Have you done any research into what works to manage vegetation/ gardens and other green spaces without using pesticides? If so, can we see them?**

Yes, we have researched on the internet and also via local practitioners.

The research has been through one of the founders of the Charles Dickens Community Orchards. Working with his employer who is a pharmacist and uses these methods successfully on his properties in and around the Portsmouth area. We have adopted these practices ourselves.

It would be best to talk with the person directly for more detail.

Research:
Wildlife and fish are the most affected. This is because pesticides applied to crops might be washed into streams or lakes, harming the fish, beneficial insects, and birds. Worst-case scenario, they may even find their way into drinking water sources and ultimately into the human body.

The other potential source of pesticides is pesticide manufacturing plants, where spillage occurs during transportation or usage either in treatment plants, waste disposal areas, or wastewater recharge facilities (Mohamed & Paleologos, 2018). These pesticide residues may also enter the river from the farming area and paddy field, caused by heavy rain, mishandling during the application, or disposal of pesticide products. The pesticide residues may be washed away from agricultural soil to surface waters through the drainage area. The concentration of residues has been proven to increase during the rainy season (Wittmer et al., 2010).

https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/pesticide-residue

Acute toxicity:
Pesticides can be acutely toxic. This means that they can cause harmful or lethal effects after a single episode of ingestion, inhalation or skin contact. The symptoms are evident shortly after exposure or can arise within 48 hours. They can present as:

- respiratory tract irritation, sore throat and/or cough
- allergic sensitisation
- eye and skin irritation
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea
- headache, loss of consciousness
- extreme weakness, seizures and/or death

Chronic (or long term) toxicity
Pesticides can cause harmful effects over an extended period, usually following repeated or continuous exposure at low levels. Low doses don't always cause immediate effects, but over time, they can cause very serious illnesses.

Long term pesticide exposure has been linked to the development of Parkinson's disease; asthma; depression and anxiety; attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); and cancer, including leukaemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.
https://www.pan-uk.org/health-effects-of-pesticides/

3. What actions do you think organisations that own /manage land in Portsmouth should take?

	Actions	By when	Comments including evidence of what works
Reducing total amount of use of pesticides (including Glyphosate used).	Please stop using these pesticides	Straight away	Industrial vinegar for weed control Bicarbonate of soda for weed control Spray neem oil to protect trees from pests

Reducing the dosage used.	Please stop using these pesticides	Straight away	
Reducing the places where pesticides are used.	Please stop using these pesticides	Straight away	
Reducing the frequency of use	Please stop using these pesticides	Straight away	
Using alternative pesticide free solutions	Please use these now	Straight away	

4. Please suggest the principles that should guide any new policy that the council might choose to adopt. This could include any exceptional situations where pesticides might be necessary, the use of alternatives, the extent to which unmanaged green spaces should be extended etc.

Portsmouth City Council would hopefully support the increase of natural capital through increasing biodiversity within the soil and above ground. This could be done by avoiding the use of pesticides.

We support the removal of anything that could be harmful to humans due to air borne exposure, ingestion and through skin contact. The policy should aim to reduce run-off from spraying treatments on pavements that could damage trees in the neighbourhood and stop pesticides getting in the water and damaging any aquatic wildlife near ponds and lakes. Trees do such a great job in Portsmouth and are valuable assets especially in the clean air zone.

Use natural methods of controlling weeds and allow many more areas to grow and encourage pollinators. Lift paving in some more built-up areas to encourage plants and insects to thrive. No bees = no food.

Tree Wardens have suggested the use of mechanical methods to remove weeds. Hand pulling weeds, using mechanical tools, strimmers with guards and scythes.

We understand that some pests need to be controlled. E.g. Cock roaches, rats and mice. Tree pests e.g. The oak processionary moth/pine concessionary moth infestations.

Japanese knotweed - burning out this weed to eradicate it.

So, we would suggest that in exceptional circumstances these are controlled with highly regulated amounts of pesticide. That would degrade quickly and not seep into the ground.

However, we would suggest that alternative approaches should be investigated first. E.g. burning out the weed or introducing a natural predator, e.g. ladybirds or nematodes for garden pests in parks.

It would be highly beneficial to use plants that are perennial and drought tolerant that would flower and attract pollinators such as bees. E.g. lavender. Some experimentation with single flowered species will be needed, to encourage greater biodiversity.

There could be more swathes of wildflowers in the city, There could be naturalised bulbs planted among them. Use plants that flower in the winter too, to help overwintering insects. Increasing natural capital.

Areas may be set aside where tree stumps could be left for the natural colonisation of fungi and insects to establish and thrive.

Stop spraying around tree pits. This can damage the trees, protect our trees. Grow wildflowers around tree pits or mulch them to help retain moisture.

Protect priority habitats from spraying pesticides in the city e.g. the orchards and oak trees.

We need to increase the wildlife corridors within the city. Where spraying does not take place. Where birds and wildlife can feed on fruiting hedges. Like the fruiting hedge planted in the Ark Dickens school grounds. Foxes have been seen eating the fruit there. Also the Hilsea Fruiting hedge.

Limiting when the weed removal practices happen so they don't interfere with the natural life cycles of plants and animals.

Comments

Thank you for including the Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens in this consultation.

Contact details

Information redacted.