

# Thurston County Pesticide Education Programs

## Working to Lower the Risk of Hazardous Products

The Thurston County Health Department is concerned about hazardous products and wastes. While many of these products are useful, they can harm our health and the environment. To lower the risks from hazardous products, the Health Department works with residents, businesses and county departments to be sure that hazardous wastes are handled correctly.

## Working with Residents to Lower the Risk From Pesticides

Residents who use or improperly get rid of pesticides can harm our health and environment. In a 1997 study, 14 commonly used pesticides were detected in Indian/Moxlie Creek in Olympia. These pesticides include diazinon, chlorpyrifos, triclopyr and dichlobenil. A WSU Cooperative Extension study identified nine pesticides that are likely to leach in Thurston County soils.

In the early 1990s the Health Department began an ongoing IPM (integrated pest management) education program for residents. Now several county departments work to teach residents how to grow a healthy landscape; ways of preventing problems; and least-toxic ways of handling weed, pest and disease problems in the landscape. The following programs include IPM information for residents.

### **Common Sense Gardening Program (360-867-2674)**

Thurston County Health Department's Common Sense Gardening Program has been teaching residents about IPM since 1991. The Common Sense Gardening Program includes:

- Six guides and four fact sheets (over 100,000 distributed)
- IPM Workshops (over 2,600 participants)
- Displays and radio spots
- Annual garden tour sponsor (2,500 participants)
- Newspaper articles and ads
- Information racks and plant signs in 23 local nurseries

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### **WSU/Thurston County Cooperative Extension (360-867-2651)**

Cooperative Extension provides many resources for home gardeners and other residents. The volunteer Master Gardeners learn IPM during their training. Cooperative Extension volunteers and staff offer these activities:

- Master Gardener clinic
- Native Plant Salvage Project
- Demonstration gardens
- Gardening and composting workshops
- Annual garden tour co-sponsor
- Booklets and fact sheets

### **Thurston County Noxious Weed Control (360-786-5576)**

Thurston County Noxious Weed Control works to monitor and control noxious weeds in Thurston County. Noxious Weed Control recommends property owners use IPM to deal with noxious weed problems and offers these services:

- Phone advice
- Site visits and weed identification
- Weed control recommendations using IPM approach
- Free noxious weed disposal
- Display, speakers, and brochures
- Help with beneficial insects

### **Business Pollution Prevention Program (360-867-2664)**

In the mid-1990s, the Health Department began the Business Pollution Prevention Program. This program helps local businesses find practical and cost-effective options to safely store hazardous products and dispose of waste. It gives information on alternative chemical products and advice on spill prevention specific to the business group. Business groups that have received assistance include auto shops, printers, labs, painters, and marinas.

In 1998, the Health Department began working with businesses that use pesticides. Tree growers, exterminators and golf courses received assistance in 1999, 2000 and 2001. In 2002, nurseries and landscape applicators will be offered assistance.