

# Health & Environment

Connection

A publication of LocalMotion, a non-profit organization dedicated to "Better Health through Fewer Toxins"

Volume 1, Number 4 / June 2004



## Shopper's Guide

# Picnic Perfect

—Melissa C. Vachon

### HIGHEST IN PESTICIDES

These 12 popular fresh fruits and vegetables are consistently the most contaminated with pesticides — *buy these organic.*

- Apples
- Bell Peppers
- Celery
- Cherries
- Grapes (imported)
- Nectarines
- Peaches
- Pears
- Potatoes
- Red Raspberries
- Spinach
- Strawberries

### LOWEST IN PESTICIDES

These 12 popular fresh fruits and vegetables consistently have the lowest levels of pesticides.

- Asparagus
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Corn (sweet)
- Kiwi
- Mangos
- Onions
- Papaya
- Pineapples
- Peas (sweet)

This produce ranking was developed by analysts at the not-for-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG) based on the results of more than 100,000 tests for pesticides on produce collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration between 1992 and 2001.

Visit EWG's FoodNews website ([www.foodnews.org/walletguide.php](http://www.foodnews.org/walletguide.php)) to learn more about pesticides in produce or to use the interactive produce scanner to see what pesticides you are likely find in the food you eat.

What could be more perfect than a basket full of juicy, sweet fruit salad, crunchy carrot and celery sticks, potato salad just like mom makes, some crispy fried chicken, a stack of double-decker sandwiches, chips and dip, and some cool drinks to wash it all down? Not much—unless all that mouth-watering food is organic.

Organic! It seems we see this word popping up everywhere these days. But, what does it mean? According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program, "Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation. Organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations."

But most shoppers will ask, "Why does organic food cost so much?"

Organic foods may cost more than conventionally grown food at the checkout. But when you buy organic, there are no hidden costs—no polluted groundwater, no eroded soil, no contaminated fish—no increased health risks for you and your family. According to Cornell University professor David Pimentel conventional agricultural practices cost Americans \$10 billion a year in external costs such as environmental damage and loss of work due to poisoned farm workers.

Farm workers aren't the only ones who may be exposed to agricultural pesticides.

**BAD NEWS:** Studies show that even after produce has been washed pesticide residues can still be detected. (Check the Shopper's Guide to see how certain fruits and vegetables rank.) Pesticides can weaken the nervous, immune, and reproductive systems, disrupt hormones, and cause a range of illnesses. Growing children are especially susceptible to the negative health effects. Children also eat more fruits and vegetables than adults. According to the Consumers Union of the United States, "...residues of some chemicals on some foods would frequently expose a young child to a dose greater than the U.S. government's official estimate of the 'safe' daily intake of those pesticides."

**GOOD NEWS:** You can reduce your intake of pesticide residues by choosing organic. Scientists at the University of Washington in Seattle have found that preschool children who eat organic diets versus conventional diets have approximately 6 times lower concentrations of organophosphorus pesticide metabolites in their bodies. And more than just produce is available organically. Look to pages 2 and 3 for tips on packing a perfectly healthy picnic.

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# packing the perfect picnic

A pesticide-free, toxin-free picnic can be  
as easy as a walk in the park!



## Food

Cows and other farm animals pass a lifetime of toxin exposure onto consumers through meat and dairy products. Organically raised animals eat 100% organic feed—free of pesticides and growth hormones. While organic produce, eggs, milk, and cheese are common in many grocery stores, organic meat is more difficult to find. Whole Foods and other natural food stores carry hormone-free and antibiotic-free meat. Ask your butcher about these healthier options. Also look for nitrate-free hot dogs. Nitrates, used to preserve food, can form carcinogenic nitrosamines. What about condiments? Ketchup, mustard, and relish can all be purchased organically. Even Heinz offers organic ketchup.

Looking for an organic chip that doesn't taste like cardboard? Michael Season's, Bearitos, and Garden of Eatin' are among the brands offering full flavor and health. For dessert, Newman's Own Organics includes tasty Fig Newmans and scrumptious crème-filled Oreo-like cookies.



## Containers

Check the bottoms of containers for the recycling number in the chasing arrows symbol. This will tell you what type of plastic was used in the manufacturing process.

**BAD NEWS:** Plastic containers, storage bags, and cling wrap made from #3 plastic contain

polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which can leach hormone disruptors know as phthalates into food. Vinyl chloride, used in the manufacturing of PVC, is a known human carcinogen. Styrofoam, made from #6 Polystyrene (PS), may leach styrene, a hormone disruptor and possible carcinogen, into food. Fatty foods, such as cheese and meat, absorb the potentially harmful chemicals most readily. Avoid #3 PVC, #6 PS, #7 Polycarbonate.

**GOOD NEWS:** To eliminate leaching, glass and ceramic are the best options for food storage and reheating. For food on the go, try a throw-back from your childhood: wax paper! When using plastic look for containers made from #1 PETE (polyethylene), #2 HDPE (high-density polyethylene), #4 LDPE (low-density polyethylene), and #5 PP (polypropylene). Rubbermaid, Gladware, Ziploc containers, and most Tupperware are made from #5 or #2. Glad Cling Wrap, Glad-Lock bags, Hefty Baggies, Hefty OneZip Slider Bags, Saran with Cling-Plus, and Ziploc bags are all made from #4 plastic and are a safe bet.



## Plates, Cups, Napkins, and Utensils

**BAD NEWS:** Disposable plastic plates, cups, and utensils are often made with PVC or

Polystyrene.

The chlorine bleaching of paper plates, cups, and napkins unintentionally releases dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)—members of the most hazardous class of compounds created: organochlorines. The finished paper products can even be contaminated with trace amounts of these substances.

Currently, about 24 million tons of plastic and 37 million tons of paper are sent to incinerators and landfills each year.

**GOOD NEWS:** Plates, cups, and utensils made from heavy duty plastic (such as melamine) are PVC-free, will hold food better than disposable dinnerware, and of course can be used again. For large gatherings or other occasions when reusing is not an option, companies such as Seventh Generation offer 100% (minimum 80% post-consumer) recycled paper plates and napkins that have been whitened with non-chlorine bleach (hydrogen peroxide).

Amazingly, modern technology also provides us with plates and utensils made of “plastic” derived from corn or wheat, not petrochemicals. When you are done eating simply toss your dinnerware in the nearest compost bin—it will soon be garden fertilizer. Even if thrown into the trash these modern plastics will take up less room in a landfill than regular plastic and won’t release toxic chemicals if incinerated. Biodegradable plastics are available on-line at: [www.greenearthofficesupply.com](http://www.greenearthofficesupply.com) and [www.treecycle.com](http://www.treecycle.com).

## Tablecloth

**BAD NEWS:** According to the Environmental Protection Agency food should never come into contact with chromated copper arsenate (CCA) treated wood. The majority (90%) of all outdoor wooden structures—including picnic tables—are preserved with CCA.

**GOOD NEWS:** As of January of this year, the industry has voluntarily stopped using CCA due to consumer concerns over arsenic exposure.

Before spreading out your perfectly packed picnic always cover tables made of treated wood. Choose cloth as it looks nice, is easy to clean, and eliminates unnecessary use and subsequent disposal of plastic. If you own a wood picnic table that was built in the past 30 years, it was most likely treated with CCA. You can further protect your family by using a non-toxic stain or finish to reduce CCA leaching. Try AFM’s Safecoat Durostain, Safecoat Watershield ([www.afmsafecoat.com](http://www.afmsafecoat.com)), or Auro’s Woodstain ([www.aurousa.com](http://www.aurousa.com)).

## Pest Protection

**BAD NEWS:** Reports of adverse reactions to DEET include rashes, fevers, seizures, and death. Children under 1 and pregnant or nursing women should not use DEET. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all others use precautions with DEET and reminds consumers that repeated application may increase the potential toxic effects of DEET.

**GOOD NEWS:** Natural products work as well as DEET—they simply need to be applied more often. Skin-so-Soft and other citronella-based products have been shown to last only about 20 minutes. Instead, reach for products containing eucalyptus oil or soy oil. Fite Bite and Repel brands offer DEET-free lemon eucalyptus repellents shown to last about 2 hours—as long as products containing 10% DEET. A study published in the New England Journal of Medicine shows soy-based products, such as HOMS’ Bite Blocker for Kids (containing 2% soy oil) protect against mosquitoes for a little over 1½ hours. If outside for extended periods, simply reapply without worrying about increased health risks. Citronella candles at dusk (when mosquitos are more active) provide a warm glow and offer protection from pests in small areas (for decks and patios). Don’t use repellent-laden wristbands, which have been shown to be ineffective. HOMS’ Bite Blocker is available on-line at [www.homs.com](http://www.homs.com).

# PESTICIDE POLICIES AND PERILS

—Kate Webber & Melissa C. Vachon

## Progressive Pesticide Policies



Concerned communities across the U.S. and Canada are taking action to protect the health of their residents by adopting practices and policies to limit or even eliminate the use of pesticides in public places. Below is a list of just a few of the many towns joining this growing trend.

■ **Lawrence and Wichita, Kansas, Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, and Seattle, Washington,** have designated certain parks or park areas as pesticide-free.

■ **Marblehead, Massachusetts,** adopted an Organic Pest Management Policy for turf and landscape on all town-owned lands.

■ The City Council of **Sebastopol, California** voted to establish Sebastopol as a Voluntary Toxics Free Zone. The City chose to not use toxic pesticides on City maintained property, and to support voluntary reduction of pesticide use among residents.

■ **San Francisco, California,** banned the use of the most toxic pesticides on city property, including outdoor parks, golf courses, public housing, and any building owned by the city.

■ **Toronto and Halifax, Canada,** passed by-laws that restrict the use of lawn pesticides for cosmetic purposes on both private and public property.

To find out what your city is doing to reduce the use of pesticides, contact your local public works department. Residents, too, can help to reduce pesticides in their community by maintaining their own yards without the use of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and other pesticides.

## Lawn Chemicals Linked to Cancer in Dogs



Scottish Terriers exposed to chemically-treated lawns are more likely to develop bladder cancer versus Scotties exposed to untreated lawns, according to a recent study from Purdue University. Compared to dogs with chemical-free lawns, dogs exposed to herbicides (weed killers) had 3 1/2 times greater risk of bladder cancer. The risk doubled (to over 7 times more likely) when the dogs were exposed to both herbicides and insecticides. The researchers found a group of chemicals, known as phenoxy herbicides, to be of particular concern.

The most common phenoxy herbicide, 2,4-D—found

in products such as Weed-B-Gone, Barrage, Savage, Weedtrine-II—has also been linked to canine malignant lymphoma.

A study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute found that four or more lawn applications of 2,4-D per year raised the risk of cancer to twice that of dogs living in households that didn't use 2,4-D.

Remember, healthy soil is a lawn's best defense against weeds. Synthetic fertilizers and toxic pesticides kill the microorganisms necessary for good soil and plant health. By using non-synthetic fertilizers, proper watering and mowing techniques, and eliminating the use of toxic pesticides, you will encourage a naturally green and weed resistant lawn. Ask your local retailer or your lawn service to provide non-synthetic fertilizer—most are able to fulfill this request. And avoid toxic herbicides. Your dog will thank you.

*For tips about maintaining a natural lawn, call LocalMotion (734) 623-0773.*

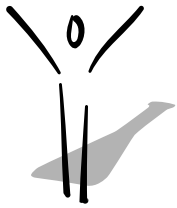
## Green Golf



Mount Kisco, NY. Residents have spoken and Donald Trump listened. Concerns over pesticide-contaminated runoff have caused the billionaire to scratch his plans for an 18-hole golf course stretching over 213 acres and 3 communities. The property, known as Seven Springs, borders Byram Lake, the drinking water reservoir for 25,000 local residents.

Concern about the environmental effects of a well-manicured golf course is nothing new. In fact, the United States Golf Association (USGA) has partnered with Audubon International (not affiliated with the National Audubon Society) to promote measures that minimize pesticide use, conserve water quality, and protect wildlife on golf courses. Audubon International provides each golf course with personalized assistance in developing and implementing an appropriate environmental plan. Thirteen golf courses in Michigan are Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries, including Bay Pointe Golf Club in West Bloomfield, Northville Hills Golf Club in Northville, Tournament Players Club of Michigan in Dearborn, and six others in Southeast Michigan. Check [www.usga.org/turf/environmental\\_programs/environmental\\_programs.asp](http://www.usga.org/turf/environmental_programs/environmental_programs.asp) to see if your favorite course is on the list.

A golf course doesn't have to be certified through Audubon International to be environmentally-friendly. Do you know what maintenance practices your golf course uses?



# LocalMotion Updates

## SCHOOL BILL BECOMES LAW

In March, Governor Jennifer Granholm signed into law Public Act 24, strengthening pesticide notification requirements in Michigan schools. Kate Webber, Director of LocalMotion, attended the bill signing ceremony along with representatives from the State Junior Leagues, the Michigan Environmental Council, and the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

LocalMotion would like to thank Representative Ed Gaffney (R-Grosse Pointe) and the Junior Leagues for championing this important piece of legislation.



Governor Granholm presents a signed copy of Public Act 24 to Representative Ed Gaffney and supporters of the legislation. Kate Webber, Director of LocalMotion, is at far left.

## COALITION PRIORITIZES PESTICIDE ISSUES

Individuals and organizations concerned about pesticide use in the state of Michigan have formed a new coalition: the Michigan Council for Alternatives to Pesticides

(MCAP). LocalMotion is pleased to participate in this group and to network with others in the state working to reduce the reliance on pesticides in all parts of our lives including in our homes, schools, and office buildings; on our gardens, parks, playgrounds, golf courses, and open spaces; and in food production.

MCAP will educate citizens about the dangers of and alternatives to pesticides; have a voice in state level policy and legislation; and support local initiatives to reduce pesticide use.

## LOCALMOTION WRAPS UP LECTURE SERIES

May 11 marked the end of LocalMotion's latest lecture series, *Practical Solutions for Everyday Living*, with a wonderful presentation about natural lawn care by Rick Lazzell of Lazzell's horticultural services. LocalMotion would like to thank Bon Secours Cottage Health Services and the Strandhagen Fund for helping to make this series possible, and Healy's Health Hut for donating natural and organic foods for the events. If you missed an event, videos of all three presentations are available.

## LOCALMOTION CO-HOSTS NEW SERIES

LocalMotion is pleased to present *Live Naturally, Live Healthier* with Mount Clemens General Hospital (MCG) and Soroptomist International of Greater Macomb County. The next events in this series are: June 15, Benefits of Eating Organic Food; July 27, Using Safe Skin Care Products; August 31, Healthy Home Improvements. All events take place at 6:30 p.m. at the MCG Auditorium. Please call LocalMotion at (734) 623-0773 for more information about this series.

## Support LocalMotion Today!

Your help is needed. *Please support LocalMotion's work raising awareness about the connections between health and the environment and providing practical solutions.* Gifts to LocalMotion are used to improve and expand programs. Every gift—especially those at the levels shown below—makes a real difference.

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LocalMotion, a not-for-profit, 501(C)(3) organization, uses reliable, substantive, scientific fact to build support for **better health through fewer toxins.**



*Letter from the  
Chairperson*

*Dear Friends,*

*This June edition celebrates the completion of our first year of newsletters. We would like to thank all of you who have let us know how valuable this resource is to you.*

*Past editions of Health and Environment Connection have helped us to keep our gardens naturally green, clean house without compromising health, and renovate a room with the right materials. After all this hard work, it's time to have some fun. This newsletter is packed with tips for a healthy picnic (Picnic Perfect, pg.1), including a handy guide to produce that is best bought organic (Shopper's Guide, pg. 1). Whether on the beach or at the local park, picnicking is an ideal way to indulge in summer's abundance.*

*The staff at LocalMotion looks forward to presenting more fun and easy ways to reduce the use of harmful toxins in our daily lives. We hope you will continue to enjoy these helpful tips and the latest environmental health news brought to you in each newsletter.*

*LocalMotion staff and Board of Directors are also busy creating healthier communities and schools. Please take a moment to read about a few of LocalMotion's recent activities on page 5.*

*Best Regards,*

*Missy Danaher  
Chairperson*

**Contact LocalMotion at: Phone: 734 623 0773 Web: [www.local-motion.org](http://www.local-motion.org) Email: [contact@local-motion.org](mailto:contact@local-motion.org)**

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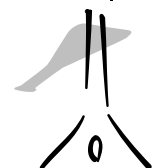
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