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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SPANO DECLARES MAY 8 THE 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL NO PESTICIDE DAY IN WESTCHESTER**

**Urges residents to work year-round to reduce use of pesticide**

May 8 will be No Pesticide Day in Westchester.

County Executive Andy Spano said the day is designed to raise public awareness about the health impacts of pesticides on people, pets, birds and other wildlife.

“This is something I urge residents to pay attention to all-year-round,” Spano said. “People must understand that the beautiful green, bug-free lawns they crave come at a price. This year No Pesticides Day is focused on the dangers of pesticides to children. There seems to be a correlation between exposure to pesticides and childhood asthma. But pesticides are bad for people of all ages, pets and our environment as well.”

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year Spano has set aside a day in May as No Pesticides Day. It fits with the Westchester County Pesticide Reduction law, which mandates the end of pesticide use on all County property and education of residents on alternatives to chemicals. The Westchester County Pest Management Committee oversees implementation of this law and is the sponsor of the No Pesticides Day.

“On this third annual No Pesticides Day the Westchester Pest Management Committee decided to focus on the health risks of pesticides to children,” said Lucy R. Waletzky, a physician and member of Pest Management Committee. “If parents knew that lawn pesticides significantly increase the chances of their children developing asthma and other diseases, I’m sure they would stop using them.”

The relations between asthma and pesticides is revealed in a recent study now being published, according to the Pest Management Committee. In this study, a group of children exposed to household pesticides in the first year of life developed asthma two and a half times as often as those not exposed. Young children are especially vulnerable to pesticides due to their developing systems and play on lawns and floor.

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**The Committee recommends the following action steps for No Pesticides Day -- and everyday.**

- Cancel all routine spray service for pest control in your home. Learn about least toxic alternatives by going to [Beyond Pesticides.org](http://BeyondPesticides.org) or calling Cornell Cooperative Extension at (914) 285 – 4640. On Saturday, May 22, visit Home Compost Bin Sale Day at Saxon Woods Park and Pool in White Plains, and bring your lawn and gardening problems to expert master gardeners of Cornell Cooperative Extension. For more information or to reserve a compost bin, call 813-5420, or go to [www.westchestergov.com](http://www.westchestergov.com)
- Stop routine applications of lawn pesticides (insecticides, herbicides and fungicides). Visit [www.grassrootsinfo.org](http://www.grassrootsinfo.org) for information about the least toxic alternatives to use. Download the information to share with neighbors.
- Make sure your school complies with the New York State Neighbor Notification Law, which requires every school to establish a pesticide notification registry for advance notification of any school pesticide application and to provide universal notification to all parents summarizing all school pesticide use. Application must be made by parents to receive the pesticide notice. Parents can also work with schools to implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan for non-toxic alternatives. For more information, go to [www.healthyschools.org](http://www.healthyschools.org)
- Begin eating more organic food and wash or peel fruits and vegetables. This is especially important for babies and small children.
- Dispose of pesticides properly at Westchester County Household Chemical Cleanup Days. Not coincidentally, Household Chemical Cleanup Day will be held Friday, May 7 from 1-3 p.m. & Saturday May 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at FDR State Park in Yorktown. Call the County Household Chemical Information Line at 914-813-5425 or check [www.westchestergov.com](http://www.westchestergov.com) for additional dates, locations and items accepted for recycling and special disposal.

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- Be aware that pesticides are in many products. Try to avoid purchasing products that contain them. These can include: swimming pool chemicals, soap (antimicrobials), paints, wallpaper (fungicides), shelving paper, and mothballs. There are even pesticides in the "edible" waxes on fruits and vegetables. You can find more about hidden pesticides at [www.checnet.org](http://www.checnet.org)
- Avoid purchase of chromated copper arsenate (CCA) treated wood. This lumber, commonly known as "pressure-treated," has been used extensively in a variety of outdoor building projects including decks, fencing, picnic tables, playgrounds and railroad ties often used for gardens. Recent testing shows that high levels of carcinogenic arsenic leaches from the CCA treated lumber and can get on children's clothing and hands. There is no "safe level" of arsenic exposure in children. If you decide to replace existing structures containing CCA treated wood with safe alternatives, you must ensure careful and proper disposal of this hazardous material by contacting the Westchester County Household Chemical Information line at 914-813-5425.
- Protect your child from mosquitoes and ticks by having them wear long sleeves and pants at hours that mosquitoes bite and in grassy areas and woods. It is important to follow safety precautions when using insecticides with DEET in children. Do not use DEET on the hands of young children; avoid applying to areas around the eyes and mouth. Avoid spraying in enclosed areas and near food. The percent of DEET should generally not be more than 10% in children. Wash treated skin with soap and water after returning indoors. DEET products are not recommended for children under 2 months. There are plant based less toxic repellants but some studies show them to be markedly less effective.
- Check if chemical treatments are being used for weed or insect control at the fields where your child plays sports. Request that recreational directors in charge of community athletic fields implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan with stated yearly goals of pesticide reduction and use of least toxic pesticides. Information about maintaining fields without the use of pesticides can be found at <http://www.safeturf.com/>.
- If you have an outbreak of a pest problem, go to [BeyondPesticides.org](http://BeyondPesticides.org) and [Panna.org](http://Panna.org) to look for the least toxic alternative to use.

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**Other resources:**

- For physicians, [www.childenvironment.org](http://www.childenvironment.org) of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Center for Children's Health and the Environment.
- For parents: the Pediatric Environmental Specialty Unit at 866-265-6201.
- Pregnant women and nursing mothers need to be especially vigilant to avoid pesticide exposure. In addition to the above mentioned places of caution there are situations that one wouldn't expect to have danger of pesticide exposure. In the spring hardware stores often have bags of pesticides which have an off gas danger, Tree nurseries use pesticides so often that pregnant and nursing women should probably avoid them all together unless its an organic nursery. Airlines also often use pesticides on some flights.
- Everyone is encouraged to take part in reducing the use of toxic pesticides in whatever way they can. Parents can educate themselves about pesticides by reading the authoritative book by Philip Landrigan M.D., "Raising Healthy Children in a Toxic World" [www.healthykids-toxicworld.com](http://www.healthykids-toxicworld.com) .
- Involve your children by going to the Green Squad website at [www.nrdc.org/greensquad](http://www.nrdc.org/greensquad)
- Contact the Westchester County Pest Management Committee at 800 Michaelian Office Buildings 148 Martine Ave, White Plains, New York, 10601

**Westchester County No Pesticides Day Co-Sponsors**

Action for Tomorrow's Environment  
 American Association on Mental Retardation  
 American Lung Association of the Hudson Valley  
 Audubon Naturalist  
 Audubon New York  
 Beyond Pesticides  
 Children's Health Environmental Coalition  
 Environment and Human Health, Inc  
 Environmental Advocates  
 Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve  
 Grassroots Environmental Education  
 Healthy Schools Network, Inc  
 Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition  
 League of Women Voters of Westchester

Learning Disability Association of America  
 Lymphoma Foundation of America  
 Native Plant Center  
 Natural Resources Defense Council  
 New York Public Interest Research Group  
 No Spray Coalition  
 Rachel Carson Council, Inc  
 Riverkeeper  
 Save the Sound  
 Sheldrake Environmental Center  
 Sierra Club, Lower Hudson Chapter  
 Toxics Action Center  
 Waterkeeper Alliance  
 Wildlife Conservation Society