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**COUNTY AND LARCHMONT NURSERIES TEAM UP
TO SPREAD INFORMATION, NOT PESTICIDES**

In what the county hopes will be the first of many alliances, Westchester is teaming up with Larchmont Nurseries and Greenhouses to promote programs to get homeowners and gardeners to reduce or eliminate their use of pesticides, County Executive Andy Spano announced today.

“We want information to be spread – not pesticides,” said Spano, who has initiated several measures to reduce the reliance of governments and individuals on pesticides. “By working with Larchmont Nurseries – and hopefully other garden centers – we can get information about non chemical alternatives to toxic pesticides directly to our homeowners and gardeners. This is an important way we can keep our water clean in Westchester.”

The county has erected a special exhibit at the nursery with literature and information about the county’s public-education campaign, “Keep Our Water H2OK,” a key element of which is the reduction in the use of fertilizers and toxic chemicals which pollute drinking water when they run off into waterways. Spano has also initiated other measures to reduce the use of pesticides including a phase-out of their use on county properties and training programs for municipal workers in other non-toxic pest-management techniques.

Spano credited Joanne Grossman, owner of the two-acre Larchmont Nurseries, for contacting his office, asking how she can help with the effort to educate the public about the problems of misuse and overuse of pesticides.

“Joanne Grossman loses business because she won’t just sell toxic pesticides to customers on demand nor send her employees routinely out to spread these pesticides. She wants people to understand how dangerous these chemicals can be to people, their babies who crawl on the lawns, to pets and to our water supplies,” Spano said. “I hope other nurseries will join us on this important public education issue.”

Grossman, who has owned Larchmont Nurseries, located on Boston Post Road, for 24 years, said, "I'm old fashioned. I'm not in this business just to make money. I want to do my part to educate people about the misuse and overuse of these pesticides." Grossman said she has a network of others in the landscape/tree business who share a similar philosophy, to which she will refer business.

Spano, since taking office in 1998, has taken numerous steps to reduce the use of pesticides in the county. These include:

- At his instigation, the Board of Legislators last year approved a Pesticide Reduction Law, to protect public health and safety by phasing out most county government use of chemical pesticides by Jan. 1, 2002 and to adopt pest-control measures that substantially rely on non-chemical strategies.
- Westchester County has opted into a state "neighborhood notification law" that requires 48-hour notice to be given to neighbors when toxic chemicals are going to be spread or sprayed nearby.
- As a way to help local cities, towns and villages cut down on their use of pesticides, the county has been running training sessions for municipal employees in alternatives to pesticides. The next session will be in August. So far, three sessions have been conducted, directed mostly to golf course issues.

"We have many lush gardens, lawns and parks in Westchester, and people care about how these look," said Spano. "But we have to make people understand that there are ways to have a nice lawn without using so many chemicals that can hurt their health and our environment."

Commented County Commissioner of Health Joshua Lipsman, "The health of Westchester's children and grandchildren depends on how well we take care of the environment. Through model partnerships such as this one, we work toward ensuring a healthy future for the generations to come."