

Rules would restrict sale, use of roughly 250 gardening products

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Environmental groups lobbying the Ontario government for a powerful cosmetic pesticide ban say the province is set to announce sweeping new regulations that will outlaw hundreds of chemical products from use on neighbourhood lawns.

The Ministry of the Environment is expected to make its list of banned chemicals public tomorrow.

If approved, most of the 85 substances – found in roughly 250 products – would be barred from sale and use for cosmetic purposes, said Gideon Forman of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

The prohibitions – the latest step in the Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act, passed last June – would likely take effect in mid-April. Stores would be forced to remove some products from their shelves or inform customers that the use of others is restricted to certain purposes.

The pesticides in the proposed ban are found in products that kill slugs, grubs, earwigs and caterpillars, along with dandelions, clover and a variety of other weeds. Among the products on the proposed list were brand names such as C-I-L Weedout, Killlex Lawn Weed Control and Wilson Garden Doctor Insecticide.

Ontarians must dispose of banned products through municipal hazardous waste collection, and use restricted products for only prescribed purposes. Errant users would first receive a warning, but fines would later be introduced.

The rules for sale of the restricted products will be phased in. By 2011, stores will be required to limit access to the pesticides, keeping them locked behind glass or cages and ensuring that customers are aware of limitations on use before taking them home.

There was strong resistance to the ban from the landscaping industry but many, already under pressure from municipal restrictions, are switching to organic substances.

The Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act was criticized by some because it supersedes existing municipal bylaws and does not stop owners of golf courses, farms or managed forests from spraying pesticides.