

Non Toxic Communities Organic Advocate Training

Glossary of Terms with Definitions:

2,4-D - 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid is a synthetic chemical herbicide used to kill broadleaf plants like dandelions in lawns and sports fields, without killing the grass. It was one of the active ingredients in Agent Orange, used as a defoliant during the Vietnam War. It is one of the most commonly used lawn chemicals. ([NTC Fact Sheet on 2,4-D](#))

Active Ingredient - the ingredient in a pharmaceutical drug or pesticide that is biologically active. The part of a substance or compound that produces its chemical or biological effect.

Acute Toxicity - Acute (short term) toxicity describes the adverse effects of a substance that result either from a single exposure or from multiple exposures in a short period of time. ([See Acute Toxicity and LD50 - A Common Industry Talking Point](#))

Bioaccumulation - Bioaccumulation occurs when an organism absorbs a toxic substance at a rate greater than that at which the substance is eliminated. Chemicals that are persistent in the environment can bioaccumulate in people and other organisms that are exposed through contaminated air, soil and water.

Biocides - A diverse group of poisonous substances including preservatives, insecticides, disinfectants, and pesticides used for the control of organisms that are harmful to human or animal health or that cause damage to natural or manufactured products. Biocides fall under the umbrella term of "Pesticide."

Biosolids - Biosolids is a term used to describe the processed sewage sludge waste that is sold as compost or fertilizer products. The name was created and chosen in a public relations contest by the lobby association for the sewage industry. ([See NTC Fertilizer Article](#))

Broad Spectrum - A pesticide (or antibiotic) that is effective against a wide range of organisms (such as insects or bacteria). A broad spectrum herbicide would target all plants, and a broad spectrum insecticide would target all insects.

Chronic Toxicity - The development of adverse effects as a result of chronic (long term) exposure to a contaminant. It can take many months or years for a recognizable clinical disease to develop.

Compost - Composting is the natural process of recycling organic matter, such as leaves and food scraps, into a valuable fertilizer.

Defoliant - Any herbicidal chemical sprayed or dusted on plants to cause their leaves to fall off. Agent Orange was the defoliant used during the Vietnam war with the active ingredients 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. The compound 2,4,5-T has been banned, but 2,4-D remains a very common chemical herbicide used on turf grass.

Desiccant - a substance used as a drying agent.

Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) - Chemicals that may mimic or interfere with the body's hormones, known as the endocrine system. Endocrine disruptors are found in everyday products, including some food and beverage packaging, cosmetics, toys, flame retardants, and pesticides.

EPA Pesticide Registration - Companies submit an application for a registration action, including testing they have conducted or commissioned. The EPA evaluates and approves the language that appears on each pesticide label. Following label directions is required by law.

Fertilizer - a natural or artificial substance containing the chemical elements that improve growth and productiveness of plants. ([See NTC Fertilizer Article](#))

FIFRA Federal Insecticide Fungicide & Rodenticide Act - A major statute that requires all pesticides sold or distributed in the United States (including imported pesticides) to be registered by EPA.

Fungicide - Substances that kill or prevent the growth of fungi.

Glyphosate - A synthetic compound used as a nonselective systemic herbicide. Glyphosate is the most widely used herbicide active ingredient in the United States, and globally. ([See NTC Fact Sheet on Glyphosate](#))

Half-Life - The amount of time it takes for half an initial amount to disintegrate.

Herbicide - A pesticide used for killing or inhibiting the growth of unwanted plants. Also referred to as “weed killer.”

Inert Ingredient - An inert ingredient is any substance (or group of structurally similar substances if designated by the Environmental Protection Agency), other than an “active” ingredient, which is intentionally included in a pesticide product.

Insecticide - Substances used to kill insects, including ovicides and larvicides used to control insect eggs and larvae.

Intergenerational Effects (also Multigenerational of Transgenerational) - The resulting effects to the first or second generation through exposure to a substance by the first generation.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) - Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a pest management system that:

- Eliminates or mitigates economic and health damage caused by pests;
- Minimizes the use of pesticides and the risk to human health and the environment associated with pesticide applications; and
- Uses integrated methods, site or pest inspections, pest population monitoring, an evaluation of the need for pest control, and one or more pest

control methods, including sanitation, structural repairs, mechanical and living biological controls; other non-chemical methods, and, if nontoxic options are unreasonable and have been exhausted, least toxic pesticides. ([See Integrated Pest Management](#))

Metabolites - the breakdown products from chemical compounds, like pesticides, that form as part of the process of degradation. The main metabolite of glyphosate is Aminomethylphosphonic acid (AMPA). Metabolites are not required to be studied as part of the EPA registration process for pesticides.

Minimum Risk Pesticide (FIFRA 25(b) exempt) - EPA has exempted certain pesticides from the requirement that they be registered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. EPA has determined that these “minimum risk pesticides” pose little to no risk to human health or the environment.

Municipality - A town or district that has local government. Cities, boroughs, townships, and incorporated towns.

Neonicotinoids (Neonics) - A class of systemic agricultural insecticides chemically similar to nicotine. Acetamiprid, Clothianidin, Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid, Nitenpyram, Thiacloprid and Thiamethoxam are neonicotinoids. ([See NTC Neonic Fact Sheet](#))

Ordinance - a law or rule made by a government or authority.

Organic-By-Neglect - Organic by neglect is stopping all synthetic pesticides without transitioning to an organic plan. This can have negative results. ([See Organic 101](#))

Organic Land Care - Organic Land Care is a sustainable ecological landscaping system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-site inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain, and enhance ecological harmony and beauty in urban and suburban landscapes and gardens. “Organic” means landscaping with no synthetic pesticides of any kind (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc.) and with no synthetic fertilizers or soil amendments.

Organic Land Care Standards - The NOFA Organic Land Care Program has developed these Standards as part of the process of educating land care professionals about the meaning of the word "organic" and to present their vision of how these principles can be applied to the landscaping profession. Through an education and accreditation program, they hope to make available to the public landscaping services that will meet or exceed the standards presented. They also hope to educate the public about the meaning of "organic" and the benefits of this option for care of the land around homes, neighborhoods, and communities. ([See NOFA Organic Land Care Standards, 6th edition](#))

Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) - OMRI lists input products such as fertilizers, pest controls, and livestock care products that are compliant with organic standards. Allowed products are "OMRI Listed®" and may display the OMRI seal. ([See OMRI Lists](#))

Pesticide - According to the law, a pesticide is any substance "intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest."

Pilot Program - A small-scale, short-term experiment that helps an organization learn how a large-scale project might work in practice. A pilot is conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, duration, cost, challenges, and improve upon the program prior to implementation on the full scale.

Plant Growth Regulator - Chemicals used to alter the growth of a plant or plant part.

Pollutant - A substance that pollutes something, especially water or the atmosphere.

Post-emergent Herbicide - A chemical that targets weeds that have already grown.

Policy - Policy is a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions.

Precautionary Principle - The Precautionary Principle is a strategy to cope with possible risks where scientific understanding is yet incomplete. When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect

relationships are not fully established scientifically. The precautionary principle has four central components: taking preventive action in the face of uncertainty; shifting the burden of proof to the proponents of an activity; exploring a wide range of alternatives to possibly harmful actions; and increasing public participation in decision making.

([See Wingspread Consensus Statement](#))

Pre-emergent Herbicide - A chemical that prevents the germination of seeds.

Product Swap - A swapping out of synthetic products for natural ones. When we look at situations where an organic program has been simply a product swap, we usually see that this method has not resulted in a satisfying level of aesthetic expectations. Organic land care is a method, not a list of product substitutes. ([See Organic 101](#))

Resolution - In government, a statement of policy, belief, or appreciation passed by a legislative body. ([See NTC Sample Organic Resolution](#))

Rodenticide - Any substance or chemical used to kill or control rodents. ([See NTC Rodent Control Article](#))

Sewage Sludge - Any solid, semisolid, or liquid residue removed during the treatment of municipal wastewater or domestic sewage. Sewage sludge includes solids removed during primary, secondary, or advanced wastewater treatment, scum, septage, portable toilet pumpings, type III marine sanitation device pumpings, and sewage sludge products. Also referred to as biosolids. ([See NTC Fertilizer Article](#))

Signal Words - These are words that describe the acute (short-term) toxicity of a formulated pesticide product. The signal word can be either: DANGER, WARNING or CAUTION. Pesticides with the DANGER signal word are the most acutely toxic. Products with the signal word CAUTION have a lower acute toxicity.

State Preemption Laws - The use of state law to nullify a municipal ordinance or authority. These laws preempt cities from legislating on particular issues, like the restriction of pesticide use on private property. ([See Beyond Pesticides Fact Sheet](#))

Systemic - Affecting an entire system. Embedded within and spread throughout and affecting a group, system, or body as a whole. Systemic pesticides spread through and are expressed by all parts of a plant like leaves, stems, nectar, pollen, petals, and guttation fluid (water droplets expressed by the plant.)

Volatilization - The conversion of a solid or liquid into a gas; vaporization; evaporation or sublimation. Pesticides can be volatile, meaning they move into the air and off site as a vapor under certain conditions. Dicamba, a common turf grass herbicide, is well known for its volatility and ability to drift long distances.

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