

## **IBCE supports Yard for Kids: a Community Health Education Program Aiming to Significantly Reduce the Use of Lawn Pesticides in Iowa**

Is an absolutely weed-free lawn worth endangering our children's health and polluting our streams? Our answer is no.

Because of the many known and unknown health threats common home pesticides pose, Yards for Kids invites you to consider prevention and ecological alternatives to weed killers and insecticides.

A growing body of medical evidence suggests that common lawn and garden weed killers do pose health threats to all of us, but especially to infants, children, pregnant women, and people whose immune systems may not be at peak performance. UNI's Center for Energy & Environmental Education is working with schools, parks, businesses, churches and home owners to reduce the amount of lawn pesticides used in Iowa.

Most people apply pesticides to their lawn assuming, naturally, that if they are sold on the market they must be safe. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has stated that "most pesticides, despite having an EPA registration, have not been adequately tested to determine their effects on people or the environment." No one wants to endanger their children, pets or the environment. But when we spread weed killers or insect killers on our yards we unknowingly create a serious health threat to those around us. The effects are not necessarily obvious immediately.

Luckily, effective alternatives to pesticides exist and many are practicing them. The City of Cedar Falls over the last three years developed a reduction plan which has saved nearly \$18,000 and 300 gallons of weed killers. The Cedar Falls Community Schools, Cedar Falls & Waterloo Parks, and Covenant Medical Center are among organizations who have taken the lead by significantly reducing the use of weed killers to create healthier parks and public spaces. Both Cedar Falls and Waterloo Public Libraries offer an excellent set of books and resources on ecological lawn and garden care. Some lawn care companies offer pesticide-free services. To learn more go to [www.uni.edu/yardsforkids/](http://www.uni.edu/yardsforkids/).