

# Health & Environment

Connection

A publication of LocalMotion, a non-profit organization dedicated to "Better Health through Fewer Toxins"

Volume 2, Number 2 / Winter 2005

## Hiring Hints



Maintaining a lawn can take a lot of work. Some people may prefer to hire a company to mow the lawn on a regular basis, or to fertilize and rid their lawn of weeds and insect pests.

Explain to your **lawn mowing service** you would like them to:

- Use a mulching lawn mower.
- Keep the mower blade sharp.
- Reschedule if it has just rained, so as not to cut the grass when wet.
- Raise the mower blade to 3 or 3 1/2 inches. (Tall grass is more heat tolerant; has stronger roots; and shades out weeds).
- Overseed bare patches in the lawn.
- Use non-chemical thatch control.

When hiring a **service to fertilize or provide outdoor pest control** ask the company to:

- Do an on-site consultation and soil test in order to customize the program to your lawn.
- Use organic, slow-release fertilizers.
- Fertilize when the ground is no longer frozen (after early May).
- Sweep stray fertilizer granules back onto the lawn.
- Avoid weed and feed products, which use unnecessary herbicides.
- Use no pesticides. (Spot treat if weeds or pests are intolerable).
- Use non-chemical grub control.
- Use corn-gluten meal to prevent new weeds.

Request Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for any products used on your lawn. Remember to carefully review the proposed service agreement signed by the company's representative.

For more information go to [www.local-motion.org](http://www.local-motion.org) or [www.socwa.org](http://www.socwa.org) and click on "lawn and garden".

# Organophosphates in Your Garage?

—Lindsay Brownell

Do you have organophosphates in your garage? Many Michiganders would give a puzzled stare if posed with this question, but everybody in the Great Lakes state should know about organophosphates and the dangers they cause.

Despite the name, organophosphates are far from what we think of as organic. They are a group of pesticides made from the reaction of alcohols and phosphoric acid, marketed under such names as **fonofos, methyl parathion, diazinon, disulfoton, Dursban (chlorpyrifos), azinphos-methyl, and malathion**. Organophosphates were first used in WWII as lethal nerve gases and respiratory poisons. Unfortunately, organophosphates are still in use today to kill insects on plants.

When we apply these chemicals to our lawn or gardens we expose ourselves, our families, and our neighbors. Our actions can have even farther-reaching effects because the chemicals don't stay put. They seep into the groundwater and are washed into storm drains that lead to local lakes and rivers.

The EPA has taken steps to reduce the use of organophosphates by prohibiting the sale of Dursban (the most commonly used household pesticide) in 2001 and diazinon (the pesticide found most often in air, rain and drinking water) in 2004. But this does not prevent people from still

using them today.

There are alternatives to organophosphates, such as planting pest-resistant plants and using Organocide, an organic spray oil made from sesame and fish oils ([www.organiclabs.com](http://www.organiclabs.com)).

If you have any hazardous materials or chemicals that you don't need anymore, *don't dispose of them in any way!! i.e. throwing out, pouring down the drain or sewer*. Each of the Grosse Pointes, like most communities in Michigan, has hazardous household waste drop-off days, usually in the spring. Look for dates in our next issue or check your city's newsletter.

If you are not sure if you have any organophosphates, dig through that garage or shed and read the labels of any chemicals and pesticides you have. Look for the words "organophosphate"

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## Wash Your Hands!

A recent study published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, gives more reason for children to wash their hands after playing outside. Researchers found that children playing on wood play structures made from chromated copper arsenate (CCA) treated wood had significantly higher levels of arsenic on their hands than children who played on structures not made from CCA treated wood. Arsenic levels in the sand of the playgrounds did not differ significantly. The researchers believe arsenic on the children's hands was due to direct contact with the wood.

The good news? Washing hands after play will reduce potential exposure because most of the arsenic washed off with water.

The sale of CCA treated wood has been banned in the United States since January 2004, but many old play structures still exist. Many local municipalities have taken measures to stop CCA leaching on playgrounds or have switched to plastic and metal structures. If you purchased a CCA-treated wood structure, including wood decks and picnic tables, apply a non-toxic finish or sealer to reduce CCA leaching.



## PROTECT YOUR LITTLE CAMPERS

—Melissa C. Vachon

Gearing up for summer? Right now many stores and web retailers have great deals on camping clothes and outdoor wear. A new clothing line, Buzz Off Insect Repellent Apparel, which has the pesticide permethrin bound to the fibers of the fabric, may seem like just the thing to fend off biting insects. The manufacturers state, "The idea for developing insect repellent clothing was originally driven by the U.S. Armed Forces' need to protect field troops in a way that was safe and long lasting." Long lasting? Yes. Safe? Not exactly.

Researchers at Duke University found permethrin and DEET each cause alterations in the brain and nervous system that "can lead to many physiological and behavioral abnormalities, particularly motor deficits and learning and memory dysfunction." The harmful effects increased when the two neurotoxins were used together. Permethrin and DEET were both used extensively by service personnel during the Persian Gulf War to protect against insect borne diseases. Since then the chemicals have been linked to Gulf War syndrome—a neurological disorder characterized by symptoms of headache, loss of memory, fatigue, muscle and joint pain, and ataxia—experienced by some veterans.

Children are more susceptible to these harmful chemicals than adults. Do your little campers a favor and pack long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and natural insect repellents containing eucalyptus and/or soy oil.

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### IN YOUR GARAGE continued from page 1

or any of the chemical names mentioned above.

If you find any organophosphates, follow the instructions on the label, be sure to wear a mask and gloves, and seal it in a zip seal bag or lidded container until the next drop-off day. Ask your lawn care company what chemicals they are using, and request that they use organic means of pest control. (Refer to "Hiring Hints" on page one).

Runoff from pesticides is the number one polluting agent in the Great Lakes and Lake Saint Clair. Please do your part to keep the water we drink, the fish we eat, and the source of much of our summer fun cleaner, healthier, and safer.

Go to page 4 to learn more about organophosphate pesticides and non-toxic alternatives.

*Lindsay, a high school student at University Liggett School in Grosse Pointe Woods, is a guest writer to Health and Environment Connection. Please fill out the enclosed postcard to let her know how this article has impacted you. Doing so will greatly assist in her research project efforts. Thank you.*



# Greener Cleaners

## FLAWLESS FURNITURE AND FIXTURES

The labels of most store-bought furniture polishes and metal cleaners read: “Harmful or fatal if swallowed.” Why not skip the harmful solvents and try a polish or cleaner made from completely edible ingredients. Many oils commonly found in our kitchens work very well to replenish wood’s moisture and shine. Lemon juice does the trick to effectively clean copper and brass.

### FURNITURE POLISH:

Mix 1 part distilled white vinegar, 3 parts olive oil. Add a little natural lemon oil. Ms.

D’Angelo’s science students used this recipe, mentioned in our last newsletter.<sup>1,2</sup>

or

Mix 2 parts olive or vegetable oil and 1 part lemon juice. Apply and polish with a soft cloth. This leaves furniture looking and smelling good.<sup>3</sup>

or

Use a soft cloth and wipe wood with a bit of mayonnaise—yes, mayonnaise! Don’t worry, the sandwich smell will disappear after a few minutes.<sup>3</sup>

### TO REMOVE WATER STAINS:

Mix 1/2 cup salt and 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil into a paste. Apply to area, let sit for one hour, then wipe and buff. The salt dissolves the stain, while the oil restores the wood’s color.<sup>4</sup>

### LEATHER FURNITURE CLEANER:

Mix 1 part white vinegar, 1 part linseed oil. Apply with a soft cloth.<sup>5</sup>

### BRASS AND COPPER CLEANER:

Make a paste of lemon juice and

salt or dip half a lemon in salt and rub on, rinse with water and dry.<sup>2,3,5</sup>

or

Dip a lemon wedge in baking soda and rub on, rinse with water and dry.<sup>3,5</sup>

or

Mix hot white vinegar and salt. Rub on with a soft cloth.<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>

\*\*Hint: Brass will look brighter and need less polishing if rubbed with a bit of olive oil after each cleaning.<sup>3</sup>

### CHROME CLEANER:

Mix 1 Tablespoon lemon juice and 1 quart of water. Apply with a soft cloth.<sup>4</sup>

or

Wipe fixtures with a soft cloth dipped in apple cider vinegar. Rinse with water and dry with a soft cloth.<sup>3</sup>

As with any cleaning product always treat a discreet test spot before more wide-spread use. Be sure to write on the container the contents and the type of cleaner if you make enough for more than one use.

For the equally safe ingredients and the convenience of a store-bought spray try Earth

Friendly, Seventh Generation, or Ecover brands, available at most health food stores.

Greener Cleaners will be an on-going column in Health and Environment Connection. We would love to hear from you if you have a tried and true home-made cleaning recipe. We are also seeking testers to give their comments on the effectiveness of recipes we have on file.

For other simple, non-toxic cleaning solutions check out the sources listed below or call LocalMotion: 313-881-2263.

### SOURCES:

1. Karen Logan, Clean House, Clean Planet. Pocket Books, 1997.
2. Michigan State University Extension Genesee County, “Alternatives to Hazardous Products” [www.msue.msu.edu/genesee/natres/hhw.htm](http://www.msue.msu.edu/genesee/natres/hhw.htm)
3. Debra Lynn Dadd, Home Safe Home. Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1997.
4. First magazine, 7/21/03 “Miracle Cleaners.”
5. American Lung Association Health House, “Healthy Cleaning Alternatives” [www.healthhouse.org](http://www.healthhouse.org)

# The Answer to Organophosphates

When it comes to pest infestations in the yard, the long-term solution is to build healthy soil and grow strong plants that naturally fend off insect pests and disease. Quick-kill chemicals such as organophosphates are the problem—not the solution—because they don't discriminate. The soil's essential microorganisms, beneficial insects, and even birds become casualties in the war on pests. Problems with "bad bugs" will be never-ending without these "good guys" supplying nutrients to the plants underground or picking off pests above ground.

You can prevent pest infestations by encouraging the good guys. Here's how:

- **Fertilize naturally** to feed earthworms and other beneficial organisms. Use a mulching lawn mower—the finely chopped clippings recycle nitrogen back into the soil. Twice a year spread compost (1/2 inch thick) onto the lawn or in the garden.
- **Plant native trees, shrubs, and plants.** They are hardy and provide food and shelter for birds, butterflies, and other beneficial insects.
- **Install a birdbath** or birdhouse.

The cycle of using synthetic fertilizers and pesticides leaves soil void of nutrients and plants weak. It will take time to break this chemical dependency and to reestablish the good guys. In the meantime if pests are a problem try an all-natural insecticide spray, available at many local stores. Here are four that we know of:

- **Organocide** ([www.organiclabs.com](http://www.organiclabs.com)) Our thanks to Lindsay Brownell for this find.
- **Safer Insecticidal Soap** ([www.saferbrand.com](http://www.saferbrand.com))
- **St. Gabriel Sharpshooter** ([www.milkyspore.com](http://www.milkyspore.com))
- **Bioganic Lawn and Garden Spray** ([www.bioganic.com](http://www.bioganic.com))

Or, create your own:

- Mix 1/4 cup cayenne pepper in 1 pint of water to spray on garden plants
- Apply soapy water to leaves, rinse.

Read "Hiring Hints" on page 1 for more tips. Contact LocalMotion or go to [www.localmotion.org](http://www.localmotion.org) for more information.



## GRANDPA'S PESTICIDES

Under the guidelines of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is reevaluating older pesticides currently on the market. Pesticides must now meet higher standards for safety due to greater awareness about their effects on children. The EPA must also consider the cumulative effect of multiple routes of pesticide exposures from food, drinking water, and home and garden use.

Organophosphates, which can over-stimulate the nervous system causing nausea, dizziness, confusion, and at high exposures, respiratory paralysis and death, are first on the EPA's agenda of chemicals to reevaluate. Here is a review of the cancellation process for 5 of the most highly toxic (and widely-used) organophosphates. These chemicals have been in use since the 1950s and 1960s.

**FONOFOS: November 1998,** All products voluntarily cancelled. Formerly used on 21 crops—mainly corn. *Existing stocks may still be sold by dealers and used by farmers.*

**METHYL PARATHION: August 1999,** End use on 24 crops contributing most to children's diets (many fruits and vegetables). End use for mosquito control. *Agricultural uses continue for 24 other crops—many grains, beans, and nuts.*

**DIAZINON: March 2001,** End use for 30% of crops. **December 2002,** End retail sale of residential indoor products (including pet collars).

**December 2004,** End retail sale of residential outdoor products. *Agricultural uses continue on over 40 U.S. crops, including apples and lettuce, and on imported bananas, cattle and sheep, citrus, olives, pepper, and tomatoes.*

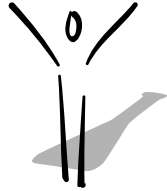
**CHLORPYRIFOS,** (trade names: **Dursban, Lorsban**): **December 2001,** End retail sale of all residential uses, indoors and out. **December 2005,** Practice of saturating ground prior to new home construction ends (termite prevention). *Agricultural uses continue as well as use on golf courses and non-residential buildings and use for mosquito control.*

**AZINPHOS METHYL: September 2002,** End use on 23 crops. **August 2005,** End use on 7 additional crops. **October 2005,** End use on 9 more crops and nursery stock.

If building a new home this year ask about less toxic or non-toxic termite prevention, such as borates (sprayed directly on the wood) and steel termite shields under and around foundations.

Remember the EPA does not promote the use of any registered pesticide and considers no pesticide safe. Currently 142 older chemicals (including malathion, an organophosphate) are on store shelves or in use today waiting to be reviewed by the EPA.

To find out the status of any organophosphate pesticide visit: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/rereg/status.cfm?show=op>



# LocalMotion Updates

LocalMotion is available to provide information to small groups or at public gatherings. Topics include less toxic cleaning and personal care products, safer household renovation materials, chemical-free lawn and garden care, and non-toxic pest control. Please call to schedule your event. Upcoming events include:

• Herb Society of America, Grosse Pointe Unit meeting. The meeting is open to the public. To attend, contact Kathleen Peabody at 313-886-2797. **Wednesday, April 13, 7 p.m.**



LocalMotion will have a display table with information and materials at the following events:

• AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION TRAINING DAY  
Vitosha Guest Haus, 1917 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor. **Saturday April 16, 4-5 p.m.**

• GARDEN CLUB OF MICHIGAN PRESENTS: THE GREAT LAKES IN THE 21ST CENTURY, a lecture by Dave

Dempsey on the complex social and environmental pressures that threaten the Great Lakes. The lecture is free and open to the public. Grosse Pointe War Memorial, 32 Lakeshore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms. **Thursday April 21, 11:00 a.m.**

• JUNIOR LEAGUE OF DETROIT GARDENERS PRESENT A FLOWER SHOW TITLED: I DO, I DO  
The event is free and open to the public. Edsel and Eleanor Ford House, 1100 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Shores. **Thursday May 5, 12 a.m.- 6 p.m.**

### LOCALMOTION NEEDS YOU!

LocalMotion needs volunteers to do simple research on the web. We have a computer and resources available in our conveniently located Grosse Pointe office.

LocalMotion is creating a Safe Schools/ Safe Parks community volunteer panel. Please call if you are interested in attending a discussion on ways to create a safer community for children with fewer toxins:313-881-2263.

## Lecture Announcement



LocalMotion presents:

### From Cleaning Halls to Painting Walls, a lecture on creating a healthier home environment

Go on a virtual walkthrough of the average home with Kate Wimsatt, former Director of LocalMotion. Taking a comprehensive look at the products, tools, appliances, and even building materials in our houses and garages, Kate will discuss potential sources of pollution and allergy triggers and what to do about them. Learn which products you should keep and which ones you should take to the household hazardous waste dump. Find out how to monitor and reduce formaldehyde and radon levels in your indoor air. Discover the best ways to keep lead out and also how to prevent dangerous mold. Come and learn how to evaluate your home and create a healthier home environment. **The Grosse Pointe War Memorial Art Studio, 32 Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms Saturday March 12, 1:30 p.m.**

## Support LocalMotion Today!

Your help is needed. *Please support LocalMotion's work raising awareness about the connections between health and the environment and providing practical solutions.* Gifts to LocalMotion are used to improve and expand programs. Every gift—especially those at the levels shown below—makes a real difference.

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LocalMotion, a not-for-profit, 501(C)(3) organization, uses reliable, substantive, scientific fact to build support for **better health through fewer toxins.**

*Letter from the*  
**Chairperson**

Dear Friends,



*Amidst snow and cold weather is a wonderful time to begin thinking about green gardens and warmer weather. To help you plan for the arrival of spring we have focused on some gardeners' passions, lawn care, and provided alternatives to create a healthy lawn without turning to pesticides and chemical fertilizers as the first plan. We are fortunate to have the wise council of Brett Marshall of Marshall Landscape and Jim Berns of Berns Landscaping to help us. Also, our guest writer on chemical pesticides used in gardening is Lindsay Brownell, a student at University Liggett School. She is participating in a national program for high school juniors who want to make a positive difference in their communities. Please fill out the enclosed postcard to help LocalMotion and Lindsay understand the impact we may have.*

*I am also pleased to announce that Melissa Vachon is expanding her role to resume as our Safe Schools/Safe Parks Program Director. Almost four ago Melissa initiated this program which educates on and advocates for the reduction in pesticide usage on public grounds and public buildings. The program's impact has been seen in the distribution of educational materials by local city governments, heightened community knowledge and interest as well as safer lakefront parks.*

*Please join us on **March 12** for **From Cleaning Halls to Painting Walls**, a **lecture** on creating a healthier home environment. We welcome back Kate Wimsatt, long-time LocalMotion staff member, to share her knowledge and expertise on identifying and reducing hidden household hazards.*

Best Regards,

Missy Danaher  
Chairperson

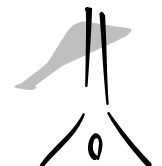
Contact LocalMotion at: Phone: 313.881.2263 Web: www.local-motion.org Email: contact@local-motion.org

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