



The facts are on our side

Nary a turf conference goes by where attendees aren't warned that Joe Public sees them and their pesticides as part of today's environmental problem. In Indianapolis recently it was Steve Hardymon's presentation, *National Pesticide Legislative Issues*, that sounded the alarm.

Dr. Hardymon pointed out that protecting the environment and fear of pesticide contamination top American's list of concerns in the post-Reagan years—ahead of substance abuse, our failing public education system and AIDS. Pretty strong stuff.

Dr. Hardymon's statistics were startling, but it was a six-year-old girl who really spelled it out for me.

One day last fall I watched my niece as she happily came running across my in-law's lawn in anticipation of one of those big hello hugs she seems to live for. About halfway across the lawn, however, she noticed the "post" marker from the local lawn care company and immediately beelined back to the porch. There, she stared at her little shoes with a look of confusion and horror, as if expecting her feet to melt before her eyes.

That vision of her, coupled with Dr. Hardymon's speech, shed light on how volatile the situation is today. The question is, what do we do about it? How do we become proactive? How do we defuse such a politically popular topic or respond to network advocacy?

Dr. Rick L. Brandenburg of North Carolina State University has a few answers in his article *When Chemophobia Strikes* (page 66). Dr. Brandenburg says that the battle must be waged one customer at a time, using professionalism, education and judicious pesticide use as our weapons. "Let the homeowner decide based on facts, not emotion," concludes Brandenburg.

I walked with my niece over the lawn and explained to her that the sign meant men had come and put down food for the grass and a spray to keep bugs away, that's all. "Oh," she said with surprise. "That's all?"

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Will Perry".

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