

A Gardener Alert – Avoid Killer Compost

From Rachel Carson Council, Inc. (RCC)

Two chemical herbicide active ingredients, clopyralid and aminopyralid are so persistent that they can poison compost and make it hazardous for use on any non-grass plants (those with broad leaves). Both herbicides are registered for use on certain agricultural crops and for use on grass – and aminopyralid is registered for use on pastures where livestock can feed.

From Great Britain have come recent reports of the loss of thousands of home gardens associated with use of aminopyralid-treated straw and “even well rotted manure...[that] may carry enough persistent plant killer to kill tomatoes, lettuce, beans and other sensitive crops” (Pleasant, B. and Long, C., “Watch Out for Killer Compost,” *Mother Earth News*, Oct./Nov. 2008) and (N. Mole, “Regulatory system fails UK gardeners,” *Pesticides News*, v. 81, September 2008, p. 19). **Aminopyralid is present in the products “ForeFront” and “Milestone.”** This is another way that aminopyralid can be written: “Triisopropanolammonium salt of 2-pyridine carboxylic acid, 4-amino-3,6-dichloro-...” (“ForeFront™ R&P” label).

Pleasant and Long advise gardeners as follows: “Thousands of acres of North American pasture and rangeland have been treated with aminopyralid, so gardeners should ask questions before buying manure or compost that contains manure” (Pleasant, B. and Long, C., “Watch Out for Killer Compost,” *Mother Earth News*, Oct./Nov. 2008). If there is a possibility that any product contains aminopyralid-exposed manure, don’t buy it.

Here is what a gardener in London thought of the disaster “I am absolutely incensed at what has happened and find it scandalous that weedkiller sprayed more than one year ago, that has passed through an animal’s gut, was kicked around on a stable floor, stored in a muck heap in a field, and finally dug into or mulched onto beds last winter is still killing sensitive crops and will continue to do so for the next year” (Pleasant, B. and Long, C., “Watch Out for Killer Compost,” *Mother Earth News*, Oct./Nov. 2008, p. 27).

Earlier RCC alerted gardeners to problems with using herbicide-treated vegetation in compost and advised them to avoid especially adding clopyralid-treated grass clippings to compost.

Sales of aminopyralid-containing products have been suspended in Great Britain (PSD Regulatory Update 23/2008, July 24, 2008, as reported in “Regulatory system fails UK gardeners”).

On November 4, 2008 RCC sent a letter to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson about this problem recommending immediate action to evaluate the impact of the aminopyralid-containing products for adverse effects, and if necessary take action to protect U.S. gardeners from the damage that was reported in Britain.

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