

# THE NEXT STEP

*Toward a Healthier Future*

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SEBASTOPOL TOXICS EDUCATION PROGRAM



## Local Toxics Disposal

■ **The next Sebastopol Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Event is Tues. July 26**, from 4 to 8pm.

To make an appointment, at least 24 hours before the event, call 707/795-2025 or 877/747-1870. Or go to <https://bit.ly/3q4OB3S>. Or email [toxicsdisposal@cleanharbors.com](mailto:toxicsdisposal@cleanharbors.com).

■ **For more about local toxics disposal**, see [www.zerowastesonoma.gov](http://www.zerowastesonoma.gov) or call 707/565-3375.

and called on stores to remove these products from shelves.

### Suggested Actions & Cautions

■ **Continue reading labels to evaluate pesticide products.** Bayer's plan to remove glyphosate from residential products didn't say how long products will remain in stores, what the replacement chemical(s) will be, and what their toxicity is. Plus other companies can and do make residential glyphosate products.

■ **Don't switch to more toxic herbicides, such as 2,4-D. For information about how to read pesticide labels**, see *The STEP Online Index* under **Assessing**.

■ **Ask your yardwork and pest control companies what specific products they're using. And buy organic food and beverages!** Bayer plans to keep selling professional and agricultural glyphosate products. Thus we can still also be exposed to it through service companies, food, water, the environment, etc.

■ **When calling for pesticide reduction in shared environments** (such as schools, offices, parks, and government buildings), don't just say "Ban Roundup." Request rules based on pesticide toxicity, so that they don't swap in more-toxic products.

**For more information**, and our sources for this article, see [www.healthyworld.org/Roundup2.html](http://www.healthyworld.org/Roundup2.html).

### Know the Terms

**Pesticide** means any material we use to kill what we consider a pest. This **umbrella** word includes insecticides, herbicides, etc.

## Positive Steps on the Roundup Front

In challenging times, good news can help us keep being part of the solution. Here, the good news is about **glyphosate** — the active ingredient in **Roundup** and other weed-killing products — and **the most widely used herbicide in the U.S.**

As we've discussed in prior issues, this toxic pesticide has been linked to a range of health and environmental harm. In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) **declared glyphosate a possible human carcinogen. Studies regularly show that it's being found throughout our lives**, including in our food, rain, soil, waterways — and our bodies! **For more about glyphosate's impacts**, see [www.healthyworld.org/Roundup.html](http://www.healthyworld.org/Roundup.html).

### Recent Good News

■ **U.S. Appeals Court directed the EPA to improve its glyphosate regulation.** On June 17, 2022, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on a lawsuit brought by environmental, farmworker, and food safety groups against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2020, during the prior administration.

The suit asserted that **the EPA's regulations don't adequately consider whether glyphosate causes cancer and threatens endangered species.** The Court agreed and directed the EPA to remedy these issues by October 2022.



The petitioners' attorneys at the Center for Food Safety called this "a historic victory for farmworkers and others exposed to glyphosate."

■ **The U.S. Supreme Court upheld an important test case, a \$25 million ruling for a Roundup user.** This June 21, 2022 Court decision affirmed a 2019 jury's conclusion that Santa Rosa's Edwin Hardeman's **two decades of Roundup use was a "substantial factor" in his cancer**, and that Bayer failed to warn the public of the risks.

### Other Updates

■ **Roundup trial status.** Roundup's manufacturer Bayer (which bought Monsanto in 2018) has been **battling hundreds of thousands of lawsuits** alleging health harm, and **is already facing billions of dollars in damages.** The German company lost three trials that each awarded Roundup users tens of millions of dollars; it's also won four trials. It agreed to pay about \$9 billion to settle a group of about 125,000 cases (about 75% of lawsuits then). Cases can continue to be filed.

■ **Usage restrictions.** Countries, states, and cities worldwide have restricted or banned glyphosate use. (See list at <https://bit.ly/3u0Bunh>.)

■ **Bayer's glyphosate plans.** In July 2021, Bayer announced its plan **to remove glyphosate from its U.S. residential lawn and garden products only (including Roundup)** in 2023. It said it would do this to "manage litigation risk and not because of any safety concerns." Nonprofits urged them to do this sooner,

## Toxics in Children's Car Seats? Oh My!

When parents bring home their precious newborns, **a common goal is keeping their children safe. And reducing toxic exposure is critical to include in that mission**, as babies' undeveloped systems make them especially vulnerable at lower exposure levels.

The Ecology Center's 2022 *Car Seat Report* can **help parents avoid toxics in children's car seats**. The organization was pleased to report that **some manufacturers have reduced the toxic chemicals in their products**.

Still, **more than half of U.S. children's car seats contain hazardous chemicals such as flame retardants (FRs) and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)**. A number of FRs are known endocrine disruptors, while some PFAS are likely carcinogens and immune disruptors. The risks of many FRs and PFAS in use haven't even been evaluated. Children and adults can be exposed to these materials by skin contact as well as material build-up in air and dust.

**The Ecology Center did find 40 car seats from eight companies marketed as FR-free, a notable increase from 2018**, when they found eight seats from four companies. However, because none are under \$100, lower-income or bargain-shopping families can be exposed to higher toxic levels.

### ABOUT STEP

The Next STEP (TNS) is published six times a year by the **Sebastopol Toxics Education Program (STEP)**. STEP is a project of the City of Sebastopol, implemented by local citizen volunteers. **STEP's mission** is to support city residents in reducing their toxic use and exposure, creating a healthier and safer Sebastopol for everyone.

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Also, **an outdated U.S. federal flammability standard is unnecessarily exposing children to toxics in the lower-cost products**. Additionally, some companies are avoiding well-known toxic FRs by switching to less-studied FRs that could still be toxic.

### What You Can Do

■ **Always properly install and use a car seat.** They're essential child safety devices.

■ **Buy car seats that clearly state their less-toxic benefits.**

■ **Be cautious of car seats and strollers touting water and stain resistance.** This often suggests hidden toxics, unless stated otherwise. Instead, look for ones with covers that are easy to remove and wash.

## Detoxing Tips

■ **Ideas for reducing your family's summer toxic load: Choose less-toxic sunscreen. Use alternatives to DEET bug spray,** unless you're sure you really need it. (If you do use it, apply minimal amounts and follow safety rules.) **Also savor and share organic food and beverages** — to reduce toxic exposure, improve nutrition and flavor, and nurture the organic farmers who are showing that agricultural toxics just aren't needed.

**Learn more details about these and more** in my article "Emerging Into Summer," via *The STEP Index* under **Sunscreen**, issue XX/4.

■ **Managing squirrels!** A reader asked "how to reduce the squirrel population." Well, **in general, I encourage folks to seek to live in balance with these creatures**, and remember the child-like awe and joy at their behavior and mysteries. And, if they're disrupting your yard or garden, **I've written an article with various suggestions for deterring them.** I also strongly advise against using poisons with them, as this can poison pets and other animals. **For more on this**, see *The STEP Index* under **Squirrels**.

■ **Earwigs and Mothballs.** I recently read a local conversation

■ **If you're uncertain about the chemical safety of a car seat**, limit your child's time in the seat when not traveling. Minimize using it as a place to sit or nap. Limit direct sunlight and high temperatures in your car, as these can release toxics. (So, for instance, park in the shade and use window coverings.)

■ **Sign this petition to ask the U.S. Department of Transportation** to update its flammability standards to allow reduced toxics. <https://bit.ly/carseatdetox>

■ **See the Ecology Center's recommendations, including the specific seats they tested**, at <https://bit.ly/3OJJotf>. Its full report is at <https://bit.ly/3u08s7p>. More information is at <https://bit.ly/3NjjFXw>.

about earwigs. Some folks made the important point that **earwigs are really not a threat to us** — and in fact are beneficial, a natural predator in managing other pests (such as aphids and slugs). They're also food for lizards, birds, and more.

**If you think earwigs are damaging your plants, evaluate first.** If you do want to reduce populations, then there are simple actions you can take. See more in my article via *The STEP Index* under **Earwigs**.

**I do want to strongly caution against one remedy discussed: mothballs.** Mothballs contain significantly toxic pesticides and should only be used per the label, which means in an enclosed container for moths in a closet. I'd even caution against using them in that situation because of their toxicity. For more, see <https://bit.ly/3Onit6u>.

### Got a pest problem? Or a toxics question?

**The STEP Online Index can help!** It's easy to look up your topic and find our well-researched, condensed, and useful information — to help you get up-to-speed and into action. It also makes it easy to share this information!

[www.healthyworld.org/STEP](http://www.healthyworld.org/STEP)