

City of Northfield, Minnesota	Policy Number:
PUBLIC WORKS	Adopted: 3/19/2007 – Motion 2007-042
ORGANIC PEST MANAGEMENT POLICY	Revised:

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The City of Northfield recognizes that a balanced and healthy ecosystem is vital to the health, safety, security and environment of the city and its citizens. The City of Northfield further acknowledges the potential health risks associated with exposure to pesticides and is committed to phasing out the use of pesticides on City owned land through the implementation of an Organic Pest Management Policy for Turf & Non-Aquatic Landscape ("OPM Policy").

Organic Pest Management (OPM) is a problem-solving strategy that prioritizes a natural, organic approach to turf grass and landscape management without the use of toxic pesticides. It mandates the use of natural, organic cultural practices that promote healthy soil and plant life as a preventative measure against the onset of turf and landscape pest problems. OPM responds to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources and promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity.

Implementation of the OPM Policy is intended to augment and guide the existing turf and landscape management practices on property under the City's control and to set an example for residents of environmentally sustainable turf and landscape practices.

STATEMENT OF ACTION

The City of Northfield hereby adopts an Organic Pest Management Policy, which mandates the following:

The Public Services Department shall incorporate the following components into a formal Turf and Landscape Management Plan as appropriate for each of the four landscape maintenance levels of city owned property.¹

The use and application of synthetic toxic chemical pesticides either by City of Northfield employees or by private contractors is to be phased out over a 6 year period and eventually eliminated on all City-owned lands.

Natural, organic turf and landscape cultural practices and maintenance shall be the method of choice to understand, prevent, and control potential pest problems. The Management Plan shall contain measurable goals and action steps to move toward Organic Pest Management practices.

The Public Services Department shall present annual information regarding the Department's Turf Management plan to a joint committee comprised of Environmental Quality Commission and Park and Recreation Advisory Board members, including an account of chemical and non-chemical control methods, the specific substances applied and their amount and dates of

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application; observed results; and extraneous variables such as climate conditions that significantly impacted turf management.

The Environmental Quality Commission will develop an action plan to foster public awareness of this organic pest management policy, including public education regarding the use of herbicides, issues of public health, environmental quality and safety, and state of the art organic turf and landscape management practices.

¹ The four turf maintenance categories currently identified by the Northfield Department of Public Service are: 1. "special" (athletic and high traffic/visibility); 2. "community" (play areas and parks); 3. "neighborhood" (play areas and parks); and 4. "nature areas/open space."

DEFINITIONS

Many of the terms required to articulate an OPM Policy have broad meanings and can be easily misused and/or misconstrued. For the purposes of the OPM Policy, these terms are assigned the specific definitions given below:

Pests: Pests are undesirable plants, insects, fungi, bacteria, and rodents, birds and other animals that are found to interfere with human activity. Common examples in turf grass and landscape can be, but are not limited to, crabgrass, knotweed, poison ivy, chinch bugs, grubs and a variety of plant pathogens.

Pesticide: A pesticide is generally defined as any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, attracting or mitigating any insects, rodents, nematodes, fungi, weeds or other forms of plant or animal life and/or bacteria and viruses, except bacteria or viruses on or in living man or other animals, which is determined to be a pest. A pesticide may be synthetic or organic (defined below). A pesticide may also mean any substance or mixture of substances intended for use as a plant regulator, defoliant or desiccant.

Synthetic: Occurring and existing via artificial means. Synthetic chemicals are compounds formulated or manufactured via human-controlled processes utilizing chemical reactions that alter a substance extracted from naturally-occurring plant, animal or mineral sources. The term "synthetic" does not apply to substances created by naturally occurring biological processes.

Organic: Naturally occurring via biological processes, without human control or alteration.

Synthetic pesticide: A pesticide that meets both of the following criteria: a) it is formulated or manufactured via human-controlled chemical processes; and b) it does not normally occur as a byproduct of natural processes, and exists only through intentional production utilizing human-controlled processes.

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Organic pesticide: A pesticide that meets any one of the following criteria: a) it occurs naturally; b) it is a byproduct of naturally occurring processes; or c) it is an otherwise naturally-occurring product that is produced via human-controlled processes.

Specific Practice Recommendations:

OPM practices include but are not limited to:

- Selection of plantings using criteria of hardiness, suitability to native conditions, drought, disease and pest resistance and ease of maintenance;
- Regular soil testing;
- Addition of non-toxic soil amendments as necessitated by soil testing results;
- Modification of outdoor management practices to comply with organic horticultural science, including scouting, monitoring, watering, mowing, pruning, proper spacing and mulching;
- The use of physical controls, including hand weeding and overseeding;
- The use of biological controls, including the introduction of natural predators and enhancement of the environment of a pest's natural enemies;
- Annual review of turf management practices at a joint meeting of the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) and the Parks and Recreational Advisory Board (PRAB) (as specified above in Statement of Action).
- The Department of Public Works will require a cooperative turf management agreement with all outside groups who use or maintain city owned properties to ensure the safe management of city owned lands as called for in the OPM.
- The members of the Environmental Quality Commission, and the Parks and Recreational Advisory Board shall conduct a joint meeting in 2013 to review the annual reports of this policy, and to formulate a policy recommendation to the City Council regarding the modification and/or continuation of organic landscape management practices.

EXEMPTIONS

All outdoor pest management activities taking place on City of Northfield-owned land shall be subject to this policy, except as follows:

1. Pesticides otherwise used for the purpose of maintaining a safe drinking water supply at drinking water treatment plants and at wastewater treatment plants and related collection, distribution and treatment facilities;
2. Pesticides contained in bait traps for the purpose of rodent control;
3. Pesticides classified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as exempt materials under 40CFR 152.25, or those pesticides of a character not requiring FIFRA regulation;

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4. Pesticides deemed necessary for the control of common and glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica* and *Rhamnus frangula*) provided that these pesticides are used only in direct-contact application to surfaces of the target plant species;

5. Pesticides deemed necessary for the control of any pests that are designated by the State of Minnesota; or Rice County as Prohibited Noxious Weeds, and;

6. Chemicals used for the purpose of maintaining health and safety standards for the operation of the municipal pool water. This exemption applies only to the use of chemicals (such as disinfectants and germicides) used for the pool water supply, and does not apply to the surrounding municipal pool grounds.

7. That portion of city-owned right-of-way along city streets that are not maintained by the City but by property owners (as required by City Ordinance) shall be exempt from this policy, as they are maintained at the discretion of the property owners.

8. Finally, this Organic Pesticide Management Policy will allow the City of Northfield Public Services Director to identify specific locations where the use of synthetic pesticides may be warranted. However, these exemptions are to be specific in the location, timing and duration of synthetic pesticide applications. Moreover, the Public Services Director or designee shall keep a detailed record of each exemption made, and will include a detailed account of each exemption as part of the annual report to Environmental Quality Commission and Park and Recreation Advisory Board members.

Any waiver granting the use of pesticides on City property shall require the use of an Integrated Pest Management approach that emphasizes use of the least toxic material and the minimum degree of exposure for any given application.

i. The State of Minnesota currently designates 11 plants as State Prohibited Noxious Weeds: Hemp, Bull Thistle, Musk Thistle, Plumeless Thistle, Canada thistle, Perennial Sowthistle, Field Bindweed, Leafy Spurge, Poison Ivy, Purple Loosestrife, and Garlic Mustard). Control and or eradication of these on city owned properties is required by MN Statute 18.78.

ii. In addition to State-Prohibited Noxious Weeds, five additional pests are currently designated as Prohibited Noxious Weeds by Rice County: Jimson Weed, Cocklebur, Wild Sunflower, Velvetleaf, and Yellow nutsedge.

iii. Where populations of State Prohibited Noxious Weeds are small enough to be effectively controlled via hand weeding and/or mechanical removal, these methods will

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take precedence over application of synthetic pesticides. Where application of synthetic pesticides on State Prohibited Noxious Weeds is warranted by population size, the application will use the least volume of pesticide required to effectively control the population, and where practicable will utilize direct application to the target plants rather than broadcast spraying of the affected area.