



## Land Care Company Says Home Owners Need To Be Vigil This Spring

Ontario last summer legislated one of the toughest anti-pesticide bans in North America, forcing many chemical companies and the pesticide lawn care companies they supply to lose market share and/or close up their operations.

Alternatively, organic land care companies such as Applewood Acres Gardening & Landscaping Inc. (Applewood) have benefitted from the legislation.

I can't say that I am sorry to see many of these chemical companies lose market share says owner of Applewood Richard (Rick) Brzakala.



*Photo above -Richard (Rick) Brzakala, President of 'Applewood' and Board of Directors-Organic Landscape Alliance-Canada*

Brzakala, who is also President of Ontario's Organic Landscape Alliance, a not for profit trade organization that oversees organic land care service providers and acts as a reliable source for organic land care information, says that for many of the pesticide companies, the writing was on the wall years ago.

I like to draw an analogy from what happened last year in Ontario ( i.e. ban on cosmetic pesticides) to what has happened to the cigarette industry, says Brzakala. For years many people used cigarettes, government condoned the sale and marketing of them unregulated. Ultimately public consciousness changed and forced governments to act in a more regulatory and responsible manner.

Cosmetic pesticides have seen a similar series of events.

When you look at the work that organizations like CAPE ( ) have done to highlight the dangers and risks pesticides have had on children, you quickly see how irresponsible and irreprehensible the actions of many of these chemical corporations have been and how for many years they have purposely misled homeowners about the environmental health risks associated with their pesticide products. The consequences of having polluted the earth's air, land and water with toxins have compromised the safety of millions of people around the world will be with us for decades.

What concerns me now, in the post pesticide ban era, is how good a job the Ontario government will do in managing and enforcing the ban on cosmetic pesticides, says Brzakala.

Homeowners need to stay vigilant, as there is a secondary grey market in the GTA where unscrupulous landscaping businesses operate. These grey marketeers don't care about anything but their overhead and profits. Brzakala suspects that many of them will be out to mislead uneducated homeowners and misrepresent themselves as organic land care companies when in fact they are not and will only look for opportunities to empty their toxic banned pesticide stockpiles in order to realize a return on their stockpiles.

Ultimately, I don't think a homeowner should simply assume that a service provider will abide by the law. I believe that it is up to each homeowner to manage the green spaces around their homes personally.

One simple way in which to do this, suggests Brzakala, is to demand that any landscaper knocking on a homeowners door this spring provide written proof that their products and services do not present a risk to the homeowner or are detrimental to the environment.

Only then can a homeowner ensure that the risk to the environment and the generations that come after us will have a safer and healthier world to live.

Brzakala recommends that homeowners looking for information on managing their green spaces organically and/or additional tips on selecting a organic service provider, either contact the OLA or Applewood by visiting their websites at [www.organiclandscape.org](http://www.organiclandscape.org) or [www.applewoodacres.org](http://www.applewoodacres.org) respectively.