



National Federation of Group Water Schemes

Society Limited

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The National Federation of Group Water Schemes warns of the dangers of gardening pesticides/weed killers to drinking water sources and environmental health

While welcoming news of garden centres across the country reopening their doors, the National Federation of Group Water Schemes (NFGWS) is asking consumers to think carefully before purchasing or using environmentally-damaging pesticides/weed killers.

Pointing out that access to clean treated drinking water 'has never been more essential', Federation CEO, Barry Deane, said that it is important that people 'are aware of the damage that harmful chemicals, even in tiny quantities, can have on drinking water sources and on the wider aquatic environment'.

'One drop of pesticides entering a stream or drain will cause an exceedance of the drinking water regulations along a 30km stretch of river. We have to ask ourselves do we really want to risk this?'

'We are encouraging gardeners to ask themselves if the spraying of harmful chemicals in their garden is really necessary and should we not be more conscious of the damage they do? We are also asking them to consult with their garden centre about alternative means of controlling unwanted vegetation and to download the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan guidance booklet for gardeners at pollinators.ie.

'It is especially important that householders move away from having the roadside areas outside their properties sprayed with chemicals. Spraying chemicals on roads or hard verges increases the risk of chemical run off into drains, streams or rivers.

'Besides the potential damage to human health, pesticides also have a damaging impact on our biodiversity which is already under enormous pressure from habitat loss.'

Biodiversity framework

Urging its member group water schemes to access and adopt the biodiversity enhancement framework document at www.nfgws.ie/biodiversity, the NFGWS states that there is 'growing recognition that a healthy water supply is best assured where it is abstracted from a healthy environment':

'Apart from its intrinsic value, there is a direct correlation between the environmental health of a source catchment and the cost of producing a potable water supply. Key measures of an environmentally healthy source catchment include the ecosystems and biodiversity that it supports. The presence or absence of these indicators is, therefore, an important element of overall water safety planning.'

Ends

For further information please contact