

A STROLL THROUGH THE GARDEN

Common pesticide could be source of problems

This column was inspired by my best friend, Tim Bialecki of Wooster. Bialecki has been in the landscaping business for more than 20 years, which I feel gives him the right to call himself an expert.



ERIC LARSON

When it comes to church, most landscape things are run by him with a little input by me, and this truth would be justifiable. Personally, I have a great deal of respect for my friend and care about his opinion. I also care about my friend's health. We have been battling about whether the landscaping industry should be using Roundup in yards.

Bialecki has said many times, "Eric if you are careful and use the precautions that you are supposed to use, then you shouldn't

have any problems."

To an extent he is right. I also am going to say that the final verdict is still out on the problems one might experience when using Roundup. Chrissy Bialecki, Tim's daughter, is very close to delivering her first child, which is a serious concern as you read my column.

Last week while I was reading my Facebook page, I saw an article titled "Monsanto's Roundup Pesticide Linked to Birth Defects Hidden from Public" by OrganicAuthority.com. As I started to dig into this topic, I found out that there is substantial evidence on the net that has been done by reputable labs to determine Roundup's effects on our health. Here is some of the article and maybe you can help me sort through this issue. I would very much appreciate any comments that you may send back to me this week.

In a recently released report by an international group of scientists funded by Earth Open

Source, the team of researchers concluded that as far back as the 1980s regulators knew that exposure to the glyphosate-based pesticide commonly marketed as Monsanto's Roundup causes birth defects.

The report, titled "Roundup and Birth Defects: Is the Public Being Kept in the Dark?" shows a distinct link between glyphosate exposure and a higher incidence of birth defects including "malformation of the craniofacial and neural crest type, which affect the skull, face, midline, developing brain and spinal cord.

According to the study, the biotech industry has not only known of the malformation risks since the 1980s, but as far back as 1993, it has been aware that even at mid to low levels of exposure, the risks are still high for deformity.

Apparently, there are a lot of issues with this chemical and there has been a serious coverup not informing the public of the risks that are attached to using this compound. From

what I have been reading about this chemical from a number of different sources, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

I was watching "Titanic" just two weeks ago. The actors portrayed a relative calm and were in plausible denial even though they knew something was seriously wrong. From what I remember about the movie, the female lead survived the tragedy because the male lead, Leonardo DiCaprio, sacrificed his life and allowed her the chance to stay on the huge chunk of wood.

This tragedy that the Titanic experienced on the high seas could have been avoided, and the problems that glyphosate possess also can be avoided if we begin looking at more natural solutions to weed control.

If you have any gardening questions, don't hesitate in dropping me a line at [www.ericwlarson628@yahoo.com](mailto:ericwlarson628@yahoo.com) or www.ewlarso654@yahoo.com. I'll do the best to help.

Eric Larson of Jeromesville is a local landscape designer.

Just be honest with neighbor

DEAR AMY: My neighbor has become my dear friend over the years, even though we are very different.

My husband and I are childless by choice, and that's a giant difference between my neighbor's world and mine. She wants to include me in her weekly "women's group," and I don't really like her friends.

I'm very happy with my life and my group of friends. My neighbor asks me repeatedly to come to "cookie exchanges" and "craft nights," and I don't want to offend, but I'm not interested in the same activities.

What's a gentle way to say, "No thanks"? I have tried to say that, but it doesn't seem to work. I always prefer speaking directly, but that has backfired with this friend in the past.

I don't want to join something out of obligation and have it snowball. I want to remain friends and be honest.

—Neighborly
DEAR NEIGHBORLY: If you want to remain friends and be honest, then do just that.

Say, "You are so nice to invite me to these things, but



Ask AMY

Amy Dickinson
Tribune
Media

you know me — I'm not too kid-oriented or crafty and so please don't feel obligated to invite me to these things; I feel bad turning you down. You know I feel secure in our friendship, so it doesn't bother me at all for you to enjoy other activities with other friends."

DEAR AMY: To "Office Grouch" and everyone else complaining about workplace celebrations, I say be happy you have a workplace.

As a victim of the recession, I would give my eye teeth to have any workplace to go to and certainly would not complain if they wanted to have celebrations of any kind. — **Wish I Was There**

DEAR WISH: Well said. I hope your fortunes change very soon.



Young entrepreneurs setting up to go global

In 2005, Devon Brabeneq was a student at Ashland High School and tired of paying top dollar for custom printed T-shirts. After a good amount of research, the 16-year-old bought his own basic screen printing kit.

By mid 2007, Brabeneq acquired professional grade equipment and started Goat Denim Clothing, which can be found on East Second Street in downtown Ashland. During this time, he also was honing his skills by studying graphic communications at the Career Center.

After meeting Jeff Ritz in 2008, the two teamed up to launch Brabeneq's company full scale. The two currently oper-



ate 10 different companies, all of which can be found at www.dayandbrabeneq.com.

They also have established 11 branches in seven different states.

"We don't just sell T-shirts. We do quite a few things and they all tie in together,"

Brabeneq said.

The company does everything from screen printing to commercial photography, graphic and apparel design, printing and much more.

"We usually stay pretty busy," Ritz said. "If one thing slows down, we pick up the

slack with the Goat Denim Clothing brand or one of the other several projects or companies."

On top of helping manage and develop all the D&B companies, Ritz also is an aspiring musician. He takes care of all his music needs under one roof, being able to design, print and shrink-wrap his own CDs.

Brabeneq and Ritz also plan to expand GDC Industries services even further by making it a one-stop-shop for clients both large and small. The two have just recently launched branches in Nashville, Los Angeles and New York City. The company has representatives in each of these territories that act as a liaison between the customer

and the company's flagship offices here in Ashland.

"It's amazing what we have accomplished in a such small amount of time. We've done business in roughly 30 states and five different countries," Brabeneq said.

Even though D&B has branched out to many different cities, they still want to make it a point to print and produce everything here in Ashland.

Brabeneq also is a student adviser and helps teach screen printing and apparel design for the graphic communications classes at the Career Center. For information on D&B, visit www.dayandbrabeneq.com, or email info@dayandbrabeneq.com.

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