

## WHAT I NEED TO KNOW

### about Hallowell's LANDCARE MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE.

The **PURPOSE** of the Ordinance is to protect the health and welfare of all Hallowell residents and their pets, to conserve and protect the Vaughan Stream, the Kennebec River, all aquatic life, wetlands, vital pollinators, wildlife, native plants and our soil, **by limiting the use of synthetic pesticides on both public and private property.** The ordinance does not apply to lands used for commercial agriculture, which is regulated by the USDA. The Landcare Management Ordinance (LMO) was approved in September 2023 and is in the City of Hallowell Revised Code of Ordinances, [Chapter 4, Subchapter 7](#).

**The Ordinance grows from Hallowell's 2020 Comprehensive Plan which states that the City will "create a healthy environment by decreasing the prevalence of synthetic pesticides and herbicides and other pollutants," and recommends an ordinance to accomplish this. See the full 2020 Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance documents on the City's website.**

The cosmetic use of pesticides for yards is clearly not worth the human environmental costs when alternative products and methods are readily available.

Organic lawns help with climate change. "Living" soils that are not treated with synthetic pesticides sequester more carbon. They also hold more water, which helps with storm water run-off.

### WHAT SUBSTANCES ARE CONSIDERED PESTICIDES?

Insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides are all pesticides.

### WHAT CAN'T I USE?

Synthetic pesticide use is prohibited. This applies to all land types including lawns, landscaped areas, patios, sidewalks, driveways, parks, and playing fields.

### WHAT CAN I USE?

You can use pesticides that are certified as organic by the USDA or considered "minimum risk" by the EPA. This includes products stamped with **a label from MOFGA, OMRI, or the USDA "For Organic Gardening."** Some examples of effective allowed organic pesticides include:

- Horticultural and insecticidal soaps

- Vinegar-based herbicides
- Essential oil-based pesticides
- Diatomaceous earth
- Biological-based pesticides such as bacillus thuringiensis (BT)

**Note:** A helpful guide, [What Can I Use?](#) with the names of some local products and resources, is posted on the city website.

#### **EXEMPTIONS:**

**While organic remedies can be effective in these situations, you can use synthetic pesticides for treatment of the following issues:**

- Poison ivy control on paths and frequently used areas.
- Carpenter Ants or termites actively causing external damage to a structure. There is no exemption for other types of ants. European fire ants can be treated with Spinosad bait.
- Wasps, including yellow jackets and hornets.
- Infestations of deer ticks.
- For mosquitoes only when Maine Center for Disease Control reports the spread of a serious mosquito-borne disease
- Browntail moth infestations. The exemption is for injection of trees. A waiver is required for spray treatments.

**Note:** See the Ordinance for more exemptions.

#### **NOTIFICATION OF NEIGHBORS WHEN USING A SYNTHETIC PESTICIDE (DUE TO AN EXEMPTION OR WAIVER)**

You must inform neighbors at least 2 days prior to pesticide use and post signs for 48 hours after the application. This applies to any applicator, whether a landscape company, a business owner, landlord, or resident. An [example of a notification sign](#) and [required information](#) are available on the city website.

**PREEMPTIVE TREATMENT WITH SYNTHETIC PESTICIDES ARE NOT ALLOWED.** There must be a current active pest or plant problem. Organic products can be used preemptively.

**CAN I GET A WAIVER FOR A SYNTHETIC PESTICIDE?** You may apply for a waiver for situations that pose a threat to public health and safety or for the control of an invasive species that poses a serious threat to the environment.

### **HOW WILL THE ORDINANCE BE ENFORCED?**

If the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) determines that a violation has occurred, the CEO will provide written notice to the violator and may designate a third party to provide education and guidance about how to achieve desired results in a way that is consistent with organic land care management practices. Subsequent violations may be subject to fines. (30-A M.R.S. 4452 Maine Revised Statutes, Enforcement of Land Use Laws and Ordinances)

### **WHAT IF I WANT TO USE A LAWNCARE COMPANY?**

The company must adhere to the Ordinance. Most offer an alternative “Organic Package” that you can request. The demand for organic lawn care is growing significantly in Maine.

### **WHAT’S THE HARM OF SYNTHETIC PESTICIDES?**

**Unlike organic pesticides, synthetic pesticides have serious risks associated with them, for example:** Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, Parkinson’s Disease, Prostate Cancer, Leukemia, Brain Cancer, Learning Disorders, Hormone Disruption, Asthma, Diabetes, Thyroid Disease, Breast Cancer, Immune Disorders, Miscarriages, Low Testosterone and more.

**Children are especially vulnerable because their immune, nervous, and digestive systems are still developing, and they are less able to detoxify chemicals. Tiny amounts of pesticide can harm their hormone function at critical stages.**

There is extensive environmental harm to mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, all aquatic creatures, and soils. Insects, including bees and other pollinators that are critical to food production, are also harmed by synthetic pesticides. Their numbers have declined by 75% in the past 30 years.

### **QUESTIONS?**

Grow Green and Healthy Hallowell provides many helpful resources at [growgreenhallowell.org](http://growgreenhallowell.org) Click on “Grow a Healthy Lawn.”

Answers to LMO Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are also posted on the city website.

You can contact the **Code Enforcement Office at 207.430.4405** or email the **Hallowell Conservation Commission at [hallowellconservation@gmail.com](mailto:hallowellconservation@gmail.com)**

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