



# NEONICS: THE NEW DDT

## What You Need to Know About Pesticides Harming Connecticut's Birds, Bees, Wildlife, and People

### NEONICS HARM HUMAN HEALTH

- Nicotine-like, neonicotinoids (neonics) affect the neurological system. Studies show harms to heart and brain development in prenatally exposed children, decreased sperm quality and quantity, decreased testosterone, altered insulin regulation, and changes in fat metabolism.
- The most widely used insecticides in the world, USGS studies show they are in 53% of American streams including Connecticut rivers.
- A study on Long Island found neonics in 30% of drinking water.
- USDA testing found 63% of food samples in the US contained at least one neonic, and 57% contained more than one. Neonics work systemically, throughout the plant, so they can't be washed off.
- The CDC found neonics in 50% of the population with the highest concentrations found in children.
- A 2022 peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Environmental Science and Technology* found neonicotinoids in 95 percent of the 171 pregnant women who participated in the study.

### NEONICS DESTROY FOOD CHAINS HOLLOWING OUT ECOSYSTEMS

- One square foot of lawn treated with neonics at EPA-approved levels can kill a million bees
- Neonics are 7000 times as toxic to insects as DDT
- Sharp declines in bee and other insect populations have been linked to neonics in hundreds of studies reviewed in a 2018 Cornell University report.
- Neonics have made U.S. agriculture 48 times more harmful to insects since the mid 1990's. (Cornell)
- USGS testing shows neonics in Connecticut rivers at levels lethal to aquatic insect life.
- A crucial 2017 study showed a 76% decrease in all flying insects since 1989.
- Birds that rely on insects declined by more than 2.9 billion in the last 50 years.
- One neonic-coated seed is enough to kill a songbird and sublethal effects include interference with metabolism, migration, fat deposition, and reproduction.
- A 2023 EPA study shows neonics likely jeopardize over 200 threatened and endangered species.

## IT'S TIME FOR CONNECTICUT TO HALT WASTEFUL USES OF NEONICS ON COATED SEEDS, LAWNS, AND GARDENS

Most neonic use in Connecticut is on lawns and golf courses to control grubs, the larvae of beetles. However, there are effective and safer alternatives.

- New York and Vermont have barred the use of most neonic-coated seeds.
- New York, Vermont, New Jersey, Maine, and Nevada have passed laws restricting use in ornamental landscaping.
- Most neonic uses are banned in Europe and parts of Canada.



## THE PROBLEM WITH NEONIC-COATED SEEDS

- The Department of Agriculture does not track how much corn sold in CT is grown from neonic-coated seeds because, thanks to a loophole, pesticide seed coatings have been exempted from government regulation on the grounds that it is not labeled a pesticide when on a seed. Over 800 million corn seeds are planted each year in CT, though, and virtually all (except organic) are coated with neonics.
- Only 5% of that pesticide coating is taken up into the plant, according to industry research. The remaining 95% moves through soil and air into waterways.
- Several studies including a recent one by Cornell University reports that using neonic-coated seeds offers 'no overall net income benefits' to farmers and there are safer alternatives.
- Pesticides on the seeds are being used preventatively, whether the plant faces a pest problem or not.

