



School Pesticide Monitor

A Bi-Monthly Bulletin on Pesticides and Alternatives
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Doctor Links Allergic Reaction to Antibiotics Used in Food Eaten by Child

The first ever allergic reaction to antibiotic pesticides has been discovered by scientists, with information published in the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology*. This discovery was prompted after a 10-year-old girl had a horrible reaction from eating blueberry pie. As a result, scientists began profiling her to find out why.

The child experienced facial flushes, hives and irregular breathing. Fortunately, she recovered in the hospital after they treated her with epinephrine. Even though the girl has asthma and allergies to milk and penicillin, it

was not the pie she had the allergic reaction to, but the residue of an antibiotic found in the blueberries.

In order to understand why she had those reactions, doctors tested her for allergies to ingredients within the pie and all came up negative. When they discovered that the blueberries had been contaminated with streptomycin, they gave her an allergy test. She had all the same reactions. Further research done by scientists solidified the fact that the blueberries had been contaminated with the antibiotic. While streptomycin is used to treat infections in people, it is also used in industrial

agriculture, mixed with pesticides that are used on crops in attempts to stop bacteria and blight. According to the lead author of the study, Anne Des Roches MD, this is the first time an allergic reaction has been linked to fruits treated with antibiotic-laden pesticides.

In 2013, Beyond Pesticides, along with other organizations, led the charge to remove antibiotics from organic apple and pear production because it contributes to antibiotic resistance. Until 2013, both oxytetracycline and streptomycin were allowed for use in
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Emory University To Ban Neonicotinoids from Campus

As bee and other pollinator populations continue to decline around the world, with clear evidence pointing to neonicotinoid pesticides as a prime cause, Emory University announced this fall that it will be eliminating the use of this controversial class of chemicals from its campus, joining institutions and communities like University of Vermont Law School, Spokane (Washington), Eugene (Oregon), and Shorewood (Minnesota).

Just as the semester began, Emory University's Office of Sustainability Initiatives released a campus pollinator protection commitment based on the philosophy that "protecting pollinators

will further Emory's sustainability vision to help restore the global ecosystem, foster healthy living, and reduce the university's impact on the local environment," says Ciannat Howett, director of the school's Office of Sustainability Initiatives. Ms. Howett also mentioned the critical role that pollinators play in ensuring a secure food supply as a major reason for taking action.

The university is not just banning the use of neonicotinoids, which are a class of insecticides that are applied to or incorporated into seeds for a wide variety of plants, and affects the central nervous system of insects, affecting the organisms' ability to function. The school also plans to:

- Make sure to purchase plants for campus landscaping that have not been pre-treated with neonicotinoids, to the extent feasible;
- Specify in contracts with vendors and in campus construction standards that neonicotinoids or plants pre-treated with neonicotinoids may not be used on Emory's campus, to the extent feasible;
- Ensure any neonicotinoid substitutes used on campus are safer for pollinators;
- Plant and maintain pollinator-friendly habitats on campus, and;
- Conduct campus outreach and education on the importance of pollinators.

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Allergies

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organic production, after numerous years of National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) phase-out extensions. Consumers have an expectation that their organic foods are being produced without the use of antibiotics. Organic has been uniquely marketed as “no antibiotics” and Beyond Pesticides will continue to support consumer demand for an antibiotic-free diet.

Unfortunately, these antibiotics will continue to be used on non-organic crops, given the absence of a framework that encourages least-toxic alternatives that do not cause undue harm to human health or the wider environment. Organic agriculture can supply us with healthy food without the use of toxic chemicals.

It is important to eat organic food – nurtured in a system of food production, handling and certification that rejects hazardous synthetic chemicals. USDA organic certification is the only system of food labeling that is subject to independent public review and oversight, assuring consumers that toxic, synthetic pesticides used in conventional agriculture are replaced by management practices focused on soil biology, biodiversity, and plant health. This eliminates commonly used toxic chemicals in the production and processing of food that is not labeled organic – pesticides that contaminate our water and air, hurt biodiversity, harm farm workers, and kill bees, birds, fish and other wildlife.

With more and more Americans eating organic food, it is important to take action to ensure a strong organic program and increase public trust in the organic food label. Visit Beyond Pesticides’ Save Our Organics page for information on what you can do to secure an organic future at <http://www.beyondpesticides.org/SaveOurOrganic>.

BEE Protective

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Earlier this year, Ms. Howett received information from the Atlanta-based Turner Foundation, an organization that aims to protect and restore the natural world, based on a report (released by the Pesticide Research Institute, Turner Environmental Law Clinic, and Friends of the Earth (FOE), a network of grassroots groups, and others), which shows that many nursery plants being sold as “bee-friendly” are actually contaminated with neonicotinoid pesticides.

“As this body of science grows, demonstrating a clear connection of ‘neonics’ to either killing bees outright or impairing their ability to do their duties, we’re hearing from more universities saying, ‘How can we help?’” says Tiffany Finck-Haynes, the food futures

campaigner for FOE.

As the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to stall taking meaningful action to protect bees, Beyond Pesticides, along with other groups are working to BEE Protective. BEE Protective is a national campaign established by Beyond Pesticides and Center for Food Safety that serves as a national public education effort supporting local action aimed at protecting honey bees and other pollinators from pesticides and contaminated landscapes.

BEE Protective includes a variety of resources to encourage municipalities, including schools, public parks and campuses, to adopt policies that protect pollinators from bee-toxic pesticides. For more information on how to truly bee protective, read below, join our campaign and take action at www.BeeProtective.org.

How Your School Can BEE Protective

Interested in helping pollinators at your own school? There are several things you can do!

- 1. Build Bee Protective Habitat.** Pollinators are important members of various land ecosystems. How we manage these ecosystems and landscapes therefore plays a critical role in long-term pollinator health. There are several steps you can take to attract these beneficial insects to your garden and protect them and their habitat. Check out the BEE Protective Habitat Guide available at www.BeeProtective.org, and learn more about how to maintain your land at www.beyondpesticides.org/pollinators/LandscapesforPollinators.
- 2. Go Organic.** Learn more about the importance of eating organic food for supporting environmental and human health by checking out our *Eating with a Conscience* database, available on our website at www.EatingwithaConscience.org.
- 3. Pass the Pollinator Resolution to eliminate the use of bee-killing pesticides in your community.** You can encourage your own community, school board or campus to be pollinator-friendly and make changes that will protect your local pollinator population. Get the Model Community Pollinator Resolution, available at www.BeeProtective.org, in the hands of local elected officials or school administrators. For help with your campaign, contact Beyond Pesticides.
- 4. Incorporate Pollinator Protection into your Lesson Plan.** Pollinators are not only incredibly important for our food supply, they are critical for maintaining healthy ecosystems. Teach the importance of biodiversity, and use the decline of pollinators as a part of a larger discussion of how harmful pesticides are.