

## Pesticide Use in South Portland

South Portland has a Landcare Management Ordinance that **restricts the use of pesticides on all public and private property**. The City has set organic landcare as a standard in order to cultivate clean water, healthy soils, and thriving ecosystems.

### What pesticides are prohibited?

All pesticides, whether organic or synthetic, are prohibited within 75 feet of a water body or wetland (including ponds, rivers, streams, and coastal/tidal areas).

The use of synthetic pesticides is prohibited for all turf, landscape, and outdoor pest management on both public and private property, including:

- Lawns
- Vegetable and ornamental gardens
- Landscaped areas
- Patios
- Driveways
- Parks and playing fields

### When can I use pesticides?

**You can continue to use synthetic pesticides** as needed (without a waiver) for management of:

- Indoor pests and pests that may cause structural damage (e.g. termites and carpenter ants)
- Invasive insects [as defined by Maine Forest Service](#)
- Poisonous plants (e.g. poison ivy)
- Pests that may pose significant health concerns (e.g. ticks, mosquitoes, rats)
- Utility right-of-way applications as defined in state statute [Title 7, §625](#)

You can use pesticides that are certified organic by the USDA or considered “minimum risk” by the EPA at any time. **Examples of these types of pesticides include:**

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

## Waivers

You can [apply for a waiver](#) to use synthetic pesticides:

- In situations that threaten the public health and safety
- For the control of invasive species that pose a threat to the environment
- For the application of a rescue treatment to prevent damage to infrastructure

## How can I find out what products are allowed?

To determine if certain products are allowed for use, you can:

- **Check the List:** The [List of Products Compatible with Organic Landscape Management](#) identifies fertilizers that comply with South Portland's Landcare Management Ordinance. (This list will be updated periodically and should not be considered a final, complete list of products.)
- **Search the Database:** The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) reviews and lists pesticide products which are in compliance with the City's ordinance. OMRI has a [searchable database](#), which can be searched by product, generic materials, company name, product name, or product type. (Note: this is a huge database because it includes all agricultural products.)
- **Look for the Label:** If you are shopping, another way to tell if a product is organic and therefore South Portland compliant, is if it has one of these labels visible on the product or the shelf:
  - "OMRI" listed (label)
  - "Yardscaping"-approved (stickers on each product)

## Why Comply?

In soils, pesticides kill the beneficial microbial life plants depend upon. Organic landcare practices support the development of healthy soils and minimize the need for applying pesticides. Healthy soils serve as the foundation for vibrant ecosystems and play an important role in climate change mitigation by storing carbon and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere.

**Organic systems thrive when soil biology is healthy enough  
to support the natural cycling of nutrients!**