

Contributions to this opinion page are most welcome.

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This issue's Back Page is written by Lorne Brown

The Back Page

I don't know what it's like where you live, but every spring in my neighbourhood (what used to be called Willowdale in the good old pre-Amalgamation days of Toronto) we are invaded by chemical tankers.

Yes, chemical tankers. Tankers carrying poisonous chemicals, which my neighbours actually pay to have sprayed on their lawns. To me, this is one of the most ludicrous of activities. I'm surrounded by nice neighbours, really, who have lots of small kids and too many large dogs, all of whom like to play on their lawns. To say nothing of the foxes birds and other wildlife who also call my neighbourhood home.

Chemicals on the lawn don't just stay there, which would be bad enough; they run off the lawn when watered or when it rains, and run into our sewer system. Then it's out into Lake Ontario, whose beaches routinely get closed in the summer because of pollution.

I was reflecting on this, and the fact that, as you can see by our back cover, traditional music is environmentally friendly. An old tune, one that everybody knows, started running through my head. Everyone knows the opening words, but, unless you had a strict teacher who made you memorize the song when you were in school, the chances are the rest of the words are locked up in some inaccessible memory bank. (Funny how this bank seems to be getting bigger the older I get!)

So, in time-honoured folk tradition, I made up new ones. They're not copyrighted; in fact, the opposite is true. I would be delighted if everyone started singing them. I'd be even more delighted if everyone started acting on them.

Pesticide-Free Garden (English Country Garden)

New words by Lorne Brown

How many kinds of sweet flowers grow
In a pesticide-free garden?
I'll tell you now of some that I know
And those I miss you'll surely pardon.
Buttercups and daisies,
Hollyhocks and violets,
Yellow daffodils and blue forget-me-nots,
There are tulips in the spring and 'mums in
the fall
In a pesticide-free garden.

How many songbirds fly to and fro
In a pesticide-free garden? *etc.*
Cardinals and blue jays,
Mourning doves and robins,
Tiny hummingbirds and black-capped
chickadees,
There are birds to be heard and birds to be
seen
In a pesticide-free garden.

How many insects come here and go
In a pesticide-free garden? *etc.*
Butterflies and fireflies,
Dragonflies and bumblebees,
Ladybugs and a cricket that chirps,
There are lots of helpful insects to see
In a pesticide-free garden.

How many animals wander to and fro
In a pesticide-free garden? *etc.*
Puppy dogs and pussy cats,
Shy chipmunks and saucy squirrels,
Toads that hop and bats that fly,
There are raccoons and rabbits and maybe a
fox
In a pesticide-free garden.

How many children play safely
In a pesticide-free garden? *etc.*
My kids and your kids,
Grandkids and neighbours' kids,
Boys and girls and babies who crawl,
There are big kids, little kids, playing safely
In a pesticide-free garden.

Please feel free to change the words to suit your garden conditions. And I have to confess, "The Raging Grannies" of Hamilton gave me the initial idea.

I read in the paper the other day that legislation is being passed allowing local municipalities to ban pesticide use if they wish. Sounds good to me. Traditional music sounds good to me, too, and we know it's environmentally friendly!

Announcing a free way to
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about Canadian Folk Music gigs.

The Canadian Folk Music List
information page is located at:

<http://www.connect.ab.ca/~rkinf/cfml.htm>

Best Regards

Bob Kenyon, List Owner
Canadian Folk Music List