

## Coming to an Agreement on Cosmetic Pesticides

### **Report on the NB Department of Environment's Consultation on Landscape and Lawn Care Pesticides**

**By Stephanie Coburn, Conservation Council of New Brunswick October 28, 2008**

The pesticide workshop in Saint John was held on September 25th at the Lily Lake Pavilion. Besides the facilitator and a person from the Department of Environment's public relations office, there were six participants who supported a total ban on cosmetic pesticides and two men from the lawn care industry, one of whom was the president of the association of lawn care specialists in the Atlantic region. We each gave a short explanation of our position, then the options were reviewed and we quickly narrowed the field.

What was interesting was the approach of the two "others." After trying to cast doubt on the negative effects of pesticides, countered by Paula Tippet's expertise as a doctor of public health, they agreed that cosmetic pesticides should be banned from use and sale for the general public. Their contention was that untrained people don't use them responsibly, often don't read the instructions, think that more is better, and have unrealistic ideas about what constitutes a healthy lawn. An example given was about cinch bugs: some of their customers ask for their lawns to be sprayed regularly against cinch bugs, not realizing that this is not a useful preventive. They contend that their training allows them to use pesticides responsibly, that over the last 10 years their use, as an industry, has gone down dramatically because of the education they have received. They agreed at the end that a total ban, if enforced across the board, would not hurt their industry because everyone would be kept to a level playing field. So, a total ban on sale and use for everyone was an option they felt they could live with. I was surprised and pleased that we were able to come to that agreement.