

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL GLYPHOSATE POLICY



DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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Rev B	July 2022	Adopted by Wicklow County Council 4 th July 2022.

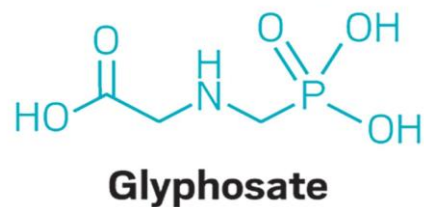
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WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL POLICY ON THE USE OF GLYPHOSATE

INTRODUCTION

Glyphosate commonly marketed under the brand name Roundup is the most widely used herbicide or weedkiller on the market today. It is a systemic herbicide which works by inhibiting a plant enzyme, killing actively growing plants in the process. It was first brought to market in 1974 and its last US patent expired in 2000. Glyphosate is now used in a range of 750 products. It has become the primary ingredient used today in weed killers for agriculture, forestry, management of amenity spaces, management of commercial properties and in household and garden use.



Glyphosate is of public concern due to ongoing investigation on whether it has carcinogenic properties. It is known to be detrimental to aquatic life. Its widespread and sometimes indiscriminate use is linked to a loss of biodiversity and studies indicate it may be linked to the loss of key pollinators including bees.

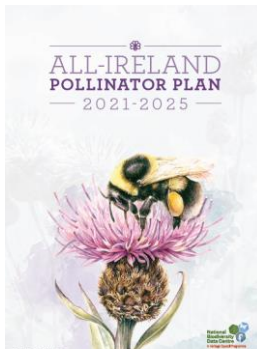
Wicklow County Council recognises that the use of glyphosate is damaging for biodiversity; that a precautionary approach is needed to the protection of pollinators and that public sentiment is opposed to the use of Glyphosate products in close proximity to both pollinating insects and to human habitations. Wicklow County Council recognises the need to reduce, replace and always where possible eliminate its use due to its potential risk to the environment and human health.

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Policy in County Wicklow

The (Draft) Wicklow County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028 sets out the Council's land use and development policies in relation to the protection of green infrastructure and biodiversity in Wicklow. The importance and contribution of Green Infrastructure for the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem services, ensuring that the region and county will be better able to adapt and respond to climate change issues is highlighted in the CDP along with associated supporting policy objectives.



On an operational level, Wicklow County Council is a partner of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 (AIPP) and is committed to the overall ethos of the plan and to our specific obligations under Objective 2:



Objective 2:

Making public land pollinator friendly by working together with Councils, Transport Authorities, Local Communities and others, we want to better coexist with biodiversity and help return food and shelter for pollinators to our island.

Target 2.1 - Increase the area of Council land that is managed in a pollinator-friendly way

Target 2.2 - Make transport corridors more pollinator friendly

Pesticides, including herbicides such as Glyphosate, insecticides and fungicides can all be harmful to pollinators and, in accordance with the AIPP, the council is committed to reducing or eliminating the use of all pesticides and to adopting the pollinator friendly pesticide code (See Appendix A)

The desire to maintain a tidy appearance in estates, along roadsides, in town centres and in public parks, playgrounds and cemeteries, with public support, has led to the use of glyphosate and other herbicide products. A more nuanced approach is now needed, balancing the need for maintenance with the more urgent requirement to protect and provide habitat for biodiversity. In order to reduce the use of glyphosate Wicklow County Council is examining alternative methods of weed control, eg: use of Foamstream and the mechanical removal of weeds. Wicklow County Council's policy is to eliminate where possible the use of glyphosate, however it must be recognised that there are situations where there is no alternative to the use of glyphosate, eg: the control of invasive species. In these cases a Business Case must be completed in advance of the application and the Glyphosate Application Record Form must be completed post application. Training for all staff involved in the application of glyphosate is required. It is essential that staff understand the implications of spraying near pollinator friendly plants and watercourses.

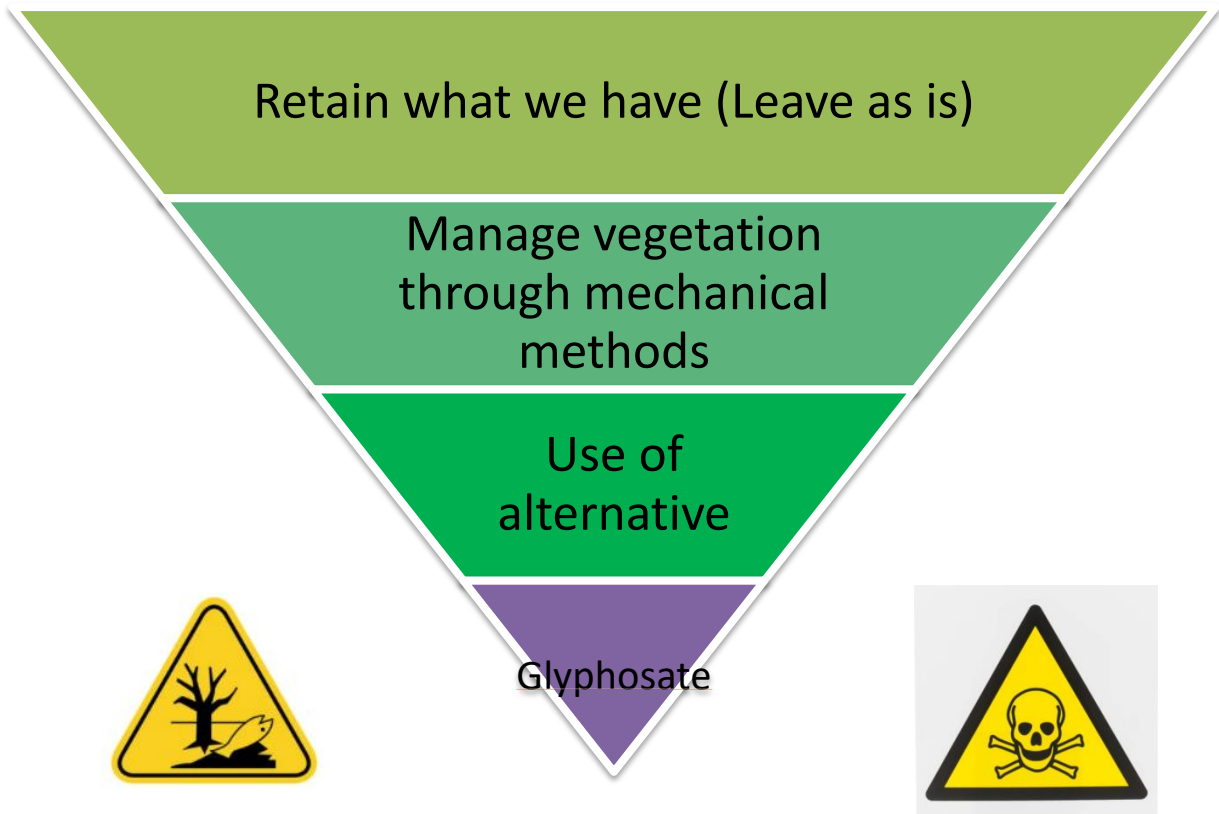
A hierarchy of decisions favouring elimination and avoidance of the use of Glyphosate will be implemented as follows:

1. Retain what we have: Identify and protect existing semi natural areas which provide food and shelter for pollinators and other wildlife. Ensure that these areas are retained and enhanced through appropriate management wherever possible. Prevent unnecessary removal of vegetation when managing sites, allowing plants to flourish, flower and seed when it is safe and appropriate to do so.
2. Manage vegetation through mechanical methods including the use of hand tools or strimming equipment having regard with due care to the timing of works to benefit pollinators and wildlife generally.
3. Use alternative (chemical and glyphosate free) products and equipment to control weeds and clean hard surfaces. Products applied must not be based on chemical herbicides such a glyphosate. Such environmental friendly products will be applied in the management of hard surfaces where plant growth would be detrimental to infrastructure. Note: Wicklow County Council is piloting the use of Foamstream for plant control.
4. Use of glyphosate or similar products to control invasive species where other techniques above are not an option and where the threat of invasive species to biodiversity or critical infrastructure warrants their use. A documented business case for use will be required.

The Business Case, template in Appendix B, must document why alternatives to glyphosate for weed control are not suitable.

The Glyphosate Application Record Form is contained in Appendix C and must be completed by the Municipal District or any operative applying/spraying the glyphosate, following the application.

Note: All staff applying/spraying glyphosate (Professional User) must be trained and registered with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.



Working with Communities to Eliminate Glyphosate Use

Wicklow County Council recognises the role played by communities in the maintenance of open space. Tidy Towns groups, Residents Associations, Coast Care and PURE Mile groups are some of the key actors at local level in the management of public open space. Wicklow County Council recognises that these groups on the whole share our aim of eliminating glyphosate. Wicklow County will continue to support the work of these groups. Participating groups will be encouraged to follow similar methods in the management of open space, providing opportunity for pollinating plants whenever possible, using physical removal and management methods rather than herbicides.



The National Tidy Towns Competition and our own County Tidy Towns, Estates and Sustainable Development Awards encourage communities to avoid use of herbicides. The judging and evaluation is consistent with best practice in environmental matters and is increasingly informed about the need to reduce and minimise the use of herbicides, to protect bees and other insects, and to promote pollinator friendly areas. Marks in both competitions can be lost where use of herbicides is evident.

Wicklow County Council's policy is to encourage residents, communities and business groups to manage weeds in their area, in a pollinator friendly way, as part

of their contribution to the Tidy Towns Awards and similar programmes. Wicklow County Council will promote better awareness on the impact of herbicides on biodiversity. Engagement with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan will be encouraged for all sectors including communities, businesses, schools and householders.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- Provide training to all staff involved in the application of glyphosate to raise awareness of the effects of glyphosate on pollinator friendly plants and watercourses.
- Register staff involved in the application of glyphosate with the DAFM and obtain a PU Number.
- Ensure widespread compliance amongst staff in the completion of the Business Case for the application of Glyphosate and also the Glyphosate Application Record Form.
- Maintain an organisation wide register of the application of glyphosate and a location for the storage of the Glyphosate Application Record Forms.
- Investigate alternatives to the application of glyphosate for weed control. Ensure that lessons learned are shared between all Municipal Districts.
- Raise awareness among community groups, schools and businesses on the effects of the application of glyphosate and available alternatives.

CASE STUDY – CLERMONT CAMPUS

From Summer 2021 there was a concerted effort made to reduce the application of weedkiller throughout the Clermont Campus, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow. The following actions were implemented by the caretaker of the campus which resulted in a reduction of the volume of weedkiller applied by nearly 80% from previous years:

- *Areas were identified where weedkiller was not required and they were left as they were.*
- *Where the application of weedkiller was still necessary, the frequency of application was reduced.*
- *A weed eater power tool was used to mechanically remove weeds. While this practice was more labour intensive it completely removed the need for the application of the weedkiller.*

It is hoped that in 2022 the use of weedkiller on the campus will be ceased completely.



APPENDIX A

Wicklow County Council's implementation of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan in 2021 – key actions

Foamstream alternative to chemicals: The Climate action team in association with Bray Municipal District piloted the use of 'Foamstream' equipment , using steam, biodegradable plant oils and sugar as an alternative to chemical cleaning and weed control on streets and paved areas.

Pollinator Friendly mowing in Municipal Districts: Each Municipal District expanded on selected 'pollinator friendly' areas for management on 6 weekly cut and lift mowing regime and included pollinator friendly species in new planning schemes on roundabouts, verges and other areas.

Pollinator Plan Resources: The Heritage Officer promoted and distributed a range of 'Pollinator Plan' resources among Council staff, householders, Tidy Towns, community and residents groups and schools, these included 150 'managed for pollinators' outdoor signs, 1500 Gardening for Biodiversity Booklets, 500 Wildlife in Wicklow's Gardens posters.

Online Pollinator and Nature Themed Talks : Pollinator Plan included as theme in programme of 'Nature is Good For You' online talks co-ordinated by the Heritage Office through the Healthy Ireland fund.

Pollinator Friendly Historic Graveyards: Carried out botanical survey and drew up management prescriptions for the following historic graveyards as actions of the County Biodiversity and Heritage Plans; Kilbride Mausoleum and Graveyard, Arklow; MullinacuiFFE, Ballymachroghue and Whitefield Cemeteries.

ALL IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN: Best Practice pesticide code as taken from *Councils Actions for Pollinators*- National Biodiversity Data Centre series No. 12

Best Practice in the Use of Pesticides

In addition to the honeybee who lives in hives, we also have 20 different types of bumblebees and 77 different types of solitary bees in Ireland. Bumblebees and solitary bees live entirely in the wild. We need healthy populations of all these bees to carry out pollination if we want to have wildflowers in the landscape, be able to grow our own fruits and vegetables, or buy affordable, locally grown apples or strawberries in our shops. Bees and other pollinators can only survive in a landscape that provides them with food, shelter and safety throughout the year. Already, one third of our 98 bee species are threatened with extinction from Ireland. Insecticides pose the greatest direct hazard to insect pollinators. However, herbicides are having a much greater negative impact on pollinators because they are so widely used. Herbicides, Fungicides and Plant Growth Regulators typically have little or no toxicity to pollinators, but many of the plants we spray as weeds are vital sources of food for pollinators, especially in early spring. Pollinators need a range of flowers to feed on from spring through to autumn. The overuse of these chemicals is making it very difficult for them to find enough food to survive in our landscape.

Pesticides should be used sparingly and only when absolutely necessary, such as in the treatment of invasive species like Japanese Knotweed

Do's

- Check the label and select pesticides that are less harmful to pollinators
- Always read, understand and follow the product label instructions fully
- Treat only the target area
- Spot treat rather than use blanket sprays
- Follow the buffer zone instructions on the product label
- Leave areas of pollinator-friendly habitat free from all pesticides. These include areas of clover or wildflowers, the base of hedgerows, and any natural areas.
- Minimize spray drift to non-target areas by:
 - Using equipment that reduces drift
 - Checking the weather forecast before application and be mindful of changing conditions.
 - Ensure that you spray when the wind is blowing away from beehives and pollinator-friendly habitat.

Don'ts

- Do not apply pesticides to bees or other pollinating insects
- Do not spray flower-rich areas (including weeds) when flowers are in bloom and providing food for bees. Plants that we might consider weeds like dandelions, vetches, clovers, dead-nettles and knapweed are important food sources as they provide high quality pollen and nectar for bees.
- Do not apply pesticides to areas that have been identified as important nesting areas for wild pollinators
- Do not apply pesticides to standing water

APPENDIX B

TEMPLATE FOR A BUSINESS CASE FOR THE APPLICATION OF GLYPHOSATE BY WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Business Case for the Application of Glyphosate

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT:

1. Proposed Location of Application of Glyphosate

Location : (eg: Street, Roadway)
Proposed Area To Be Treated (m2)
Map Provided outlining area to be treated:
Coords: X: Y:

2. Description of Situation/Area to be Treated with Glyphosate

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3. Alternatives to the use of Glyphosate

Give Details of the alternatives that have been examined and why glyphosate must be applied:

District Engineer: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

TEMPLATE FOR GLYPHOSATE APPLICATION RECORD FORM

GLYPHOSATE APPLICATION RECORD

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT:

SITE/LOCATION:

Date Product Applied:	
Product Name:	
PU Number of person applying product:	
Situation/area treated:	
Location – Outline Map: (eg: Street, Roadway)	
Area Treated (m2)	
Volume Applied (l)	
Method of Application	
Buffer Zone Applied (m) When being applied close to a watercourse or surface water drain.	
Rationale/Reason for Use	Refer to Business Case

