



## **APCC Cape Cod Native Plant Growers' Cooperative**

### **Green Growing Standards: Natural Pest Control**

**Executive Statement:** APCC asks that all growers participating in the Growers' Cooperative never treat plants with pesticides and instead refer to integrated pest management when dealing with pests or diseases.

**Background/Why:** Pesticides refer to a broad group of chemical poisons, including but not limited to, insecticides and neonicotinoids, herbicides, fungicides, and rodenticides. The majority of these products are “broad-spectrum” meaning they do not discriminate and kill far more than what they are intended for.

The environmental impacts of these pesticides are often highly understated, as there are many ways these chemicals can travel away from their intended targets. Dust, as well as drift from pesticide spray, can impact nearby plants and insects, and since these chemicals are broad-spectrum, they will kill whatever they come in contact with.

Even if these products are applied only to targeted plants, these chemicals can then be taken up by non-target insects. One example is aphids, which absorb pesticides while feeding on plants, and secrete these chemicals in their honeydew. This honeydew still contains toxins and will still have negative effects on the insects that consume this honeydew.

Systemic insecticides, such as neonicotinoids, are touted as “safer,” but they, too, are not species specific and make the entire plant, its nectar, and pollen toxic to insects.

The most concerning element of pesticide use is when they are applied to native plants meant to attract pollinators. These plants then become ecological traps, drawing insects in, only to kill them due to the residual, lethal, doses of insecticides.

**How this fits into the Growers' Program:** There is no room for pesticide use in the Growers' Cooperative. These chemicals, whether derived from nature or not, have far higher consequences than they do benefits. When dealing with issues relating to pests and diseases, we require natural, ecologically minded management best practices are applied.