

Lowe's to Phase Out Neonicotinoids, Treated Plants After Investor Campaign



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Home improvement retailer [Lowe's Companies, Inc.](#) announced it will phase out the sale of neonicotinoid insecticides from its stores and work with its suppliers to eliminate the use of neonicotinoids on the garden plants it sells. In its annual corporate social responsibility report, issued April 9, Lowe's said it will phase out over the next four years the sale of neonicotinoid pesticides.

Karen Cobb, a Lowe's spokeswoman, told [Bloomberg BNA](#) that the company has been monitoring the stream of research linking neonicotinoids to the recent dramatic decline in the populations of bees and other pollinator insects. There are studies that indicate that there are many factors, and other studies that say that neonicotinoid pesticides may be a factor, Cobb said. "Because the studies are so inconclusive, Lowe's made a decision to take additional measures supporting pollinator health out of an abundance of caution." In addition to phasing out the sale of neonicotinoids and encouraging its nursery suppliers to stop using them, Cobb said Lowe's will also distribute pollinator health brochures to its employees and customers. The company will also provide funding for pollinator gardens through the nonprofit group Keep America Beautiful.

Karen Reardon, a spokeswoman with the pesticide industry group [Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment \(RISE\)](#), said the Lowe's actions will have little impact on pollinator health because neonicotinoids are used sparingly on greenhouse-grown nursery plants, and the vast majority of neonicotinoids are used on farms. "I think there are great pressures from activist groups," Reardon told [Bloomberg BNA](#).

Cobb said her company received input on neonicotinoids from "many groups," but she declined to specify which groups the company spoke to or whether Lowe's had been in contact with pesticide industry representatives prior to

making its decision.

Last year, BJ's Wholesale Club and the Home Depot, Inc. also made commitments to work with suppliers to limit the use of neonicotinoids on plants they sell.

The Lowe's announcement comes as the White House prepares to release its federal pollinator health strategy later this spring.

A copy of [Lowe's](#) annual corporate social responsibility report is available [here](#).