

Statement from Friends of the Earth Canada on RONA's announcements

RONA discloses 70% nursery plants neonic-free this year

Friends of the Earth Canada congratulates RONA on its commitment and performance to reduce the use of neonicotinoids in its nursery plants. Last year, Friends of the Earth tested nursery plants for neonics and advised gardeners to buy only neonic-free plants through their [“Gardener Beware” campaign](#). The test results indicated over half of the nursery plants considered to be bee friendly in fact contained bee-harmful pesticides.

Just as gardening season 2015 ramps up, RONA has disclosed that 70% of all plants sold in their corporate RONA and Reno-Depot stores are neonic-free. It seems that the 30% that may contain neonics are likely to be hanging baskets and exotics like tropical indoor plants. For 2016, RONA commits to requiring all its suppliers to clearly identify their products as containing or not containing neonicotinoids.

“I understand that RONA is going the extra mile for its customers – until it can get the labelling in place next year, any customer can ask an employee to check the SKU listing on their plants to make sure they're neonic-free,” says Beatrice Olivastri, CEO, Friends of the Earth Canada. “ This is an important corporate response to customer concerns about the survival of honey bees and wild bees and one we urge other garden centres to replicate pdq.”

RONA's announcement comes ten months after a [meta-analysis of 1,121 peer-reviewed studies](#) by the Task Force on Systemic Pesticides concluded neonicotinoids are a leading factor of bee population declines.

For more information, or to schedule interviews, please contact:

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Friends of the Earth Canada (www.foecanada.org) is the Canadian member of Friends of the Earth International, the world's largest grassroots environmental network campaigning on today's most urgent environmental and social issues.

Neonicotinoids work by interfering with insects' nervous systems. Three neonicotinoid pesticides are subject to a temporary ban in the European Union (EU) from 2013 due to evidence that they harm bees.

In light of the EU ban, Friends of the Earth has been calling for a Canada-wide ban on the registration of neonicotinoids since 2013. In Canada, the federal government controls registration of pesticides products and the provinces control sale and use of the pesticides. Ontario is the first jurisdiction in North America to restrict neonic use permanently for neonic-coated corn and soy seed, developed by Bayer CropScience and introduced about a decade ago.

In a German Court last month, Friends of the Earth Germany won the right to free speech about the bee-harmful effects of neonics in gardening products against an injunction brought by Bayer. For decision and background on the case, click [here](#).

