



Pesticides threaten nature

It is spring. Weeds and unwelcome insects abound as do the array of chemicals in use to control proliferation.

Honeybees and bumblebees are becoming evermore susceptible to parasites, pathogens and, for honeybees, Colony Collapse Disorder.

Albert Einstein once said, "If the bee disappears from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years to live. No more bees, no more pollination, no more men." Scientists agree on the importance of the bee to our ecosystem.

Neonicotinoids, insecticides that attack the nervous system of insects, have been implicated in the demise of the honeybee. Most corn, canola and sunflower seeds are covered with this pesticide before planting thus permeating the entire plant, including pollen and byproduct corn syrup. Lethal concentrations have been found in pollen and nectar and persist in the soil for months or years after a single application. Measurable amounts of residues were found in woody plants up to six years after application.

Insecticide products approved for homeowners to use in gardens, lawns and for ornamental trees have recommended application rates up to 120 times higher than rates approved for agricultural crops.

Our world is one gigantic ecosystem that too often is viewed as a backyard enemy worthy of attack. Alter the natural ecosystem and an unnatural balance overrides.

Pull a weed and replace it with a native plant to attract beneficials, learn about organic approaches to insect control and help to keep life in its entirety humming harmoniously.

Linda Strauss, Manor Township

Voter I.D. fixes non-existent problem

The Republican photo voter ID law is disenfranchising America's Greatest Generation under the pretext of fixing a voter-fraud problem that does not exist.

I have a 93-year-old relative who has been voting since 1940. With the help of family members, she located the voter photo ID application form on the Internet, completed the application and sent it, with a check for \$13.50, to PennDOT. Thirty days later, the camera card arrived for her to take to the PennDOT photo ID location. She made arrangements to be driven to and from the photo session.

Without the help of family, this widow of a World War II/Korean War naval officer would not have been allowed to vote in Pennsylvania this fall.

How many senior citizens aren't online or don't have anyone to help them with this process? How many senior citizens who must vote by absentee ballot will miss the absentee ballot request deadline if it takes 30 days for a response to the application? How many disabled senior citizens won't get to the PennDOT photo location or to the Lancaster County Board of Elections to present an ID in order to get an absentee ballot request? How

many members of America's Greatest Generation will lose their right to vote under this disgraceful law?

Will it be more than 11? That's the number of instances of Pennsylvania voter fraud since 1999 listed on the website of the Republican National Lawyers Association. The RNLA does have a disclaimer saying the 11 instances are not a comprehensive list of all the voter fraud that goes on in Pennsylvania. They offer no evidence of additional cases, but argue they chose not to list all the cases they would have found had they bothered to look for them.

Neither the governor, who as Pennsylvania's attorney general never prosecuted a case of voter fraud, nor any of the legislators who voted for this measure, offer credible proof of voter fraud on a level that would require the inconvenience and hardships of the voter ID law.

As for Gov. Tom Corbett and the Republican legislators who supported this law, my relative has her ID, it's good for four years, she is in excellent health and looking forward to voting for representatives who seek to expand, not limit, citizens' right to vote.

Anthony Crocamo, West Hempfield Township
[*Columbia news, views & reviews editor's Note:*
The letter writer is a former West Hempfield Township member of the Board of Supervisors.]