



**STATE ISSUE: PESTICIDE USE AND WORKER SAFETY**

**POSITION:** FNGLA embraces the development of education and outreach tools which promote proper pesticide use and worker safety. Additionally, FNGLA supports the implementation and enforcement of science-based, scholastically recognized, practical, and unambiguous pesticide laws which provide the tools necessary for nursery and landscape professionals to protect nursery crops and plant material in the landscape without adversely impacting the natural system.

**BACKGROUND:** Florida's nursery and landscape industry is the second largest in the United States, employing nearly 160,000 workers and impacting the state's economy with an estimated \$9.9 billion dollars in sales annually. Nursery and landscape employees are responsible for the production, planting, installation, propagation, sale and maintenance of the high quality plant material that consumers have come to expect from Florida's nursery and landscape industry.

The humid, sub-tropical climate in Florida is ideal for the production of a diverse range of plant material, yet is also highly conducive to the proliferation of innumerable plant pests and diseases. Many of the pests and diseases are endemic to nursery sites and are active year round. It is paramount for nursery and landscape professionals to manage pests effectively and maintain a low pest threshold because economic viability is based on consumer demand for clean and pest free plants. Consequently, nursery and landscape professionals depend on the flexibility to use pesticides, horticultural oils and biological controls as part of their overall management strategies.

Due to the number of employees in the nursery and landscape industry, the industry's location in and around urban and suburban areas and consumer demand for quality plants, the industry is committed to proper pesticide use and worker safety. As a result, nursery and landscape professionals have embraced laws and techniques that minimize, and, in some cases, eliminate, potential risks associated with pesticide use. FNGLA continues to seek and promote education and outreach programs, which focus on the importance of proper pesticide use, storage, handling and overall safety.