

2,4-D Encyclopedia Article

2,4-D

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2,4-D

One of the nation's most popular weed killers, the **herbicide** 2,4-D (also known as 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic **acid**) has been widely used by homeowners, timber companies, government agencies, farmers, and power companies to eliminate unwanted vegetation from lawns, **golf courses**, forests, **rangelands**, rights-of-way, pastures, highways, and even farmlands. Scientists and environmentalists have warned for years of the chemical's toxic effects, and Rachel Carson's classic book *Silent Spring* described its dangers to human health and the **environment**. Subsequent studies have linked 2,4-D to cancers, miscarriages, and **birth defects** in animals and humans who have been exposed to it. **Agent Orange**, a defoliant used during the Vietnam War, was a 50/50 mixture of 2,4-D and a similar herbicide, **2,4,5-T**. For years environmentalists have urged that 2,4-D be banned or strictly controlled, but the U.S. **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) has so far not acted to do so.