

Paul Hermann Mueller Encyclopedia Article

Paul Hermann Mueller

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1899-1965

Swiss-born chemist who discovered that the chemical compound dichlorodiphenyltrichloro-ethane (DDT) killed common crop-eating pests. He was granted a Swiss patent for his work in synthesizing the compound in 1940. During World War II, DDT proved to be of enormous value in controlling the mosquitoes that spread typhus and malaria. Despite DDT's success, it did not degrade safely into the environment and caused widespread health concerns in the 1960s. By the 1970s, many countries banned its use.