

City's roses fewer in number

BY VINCENT MCDERMOTT, THE WINDSOR STAR JULY 23, 2011 12:00 AM



The air in the City of Roses is not as sweet as it once was. Following a 2009 provincial ban on pesticides, Windsor has found it difficult to care for the delicate flowers, forcing the city to remove approximately half of its public rose beds, said Don Sadler, executive director of Parks and Recreation.

"When one has large flower beds the way we did, it becomes almost impossible to maintain the rose gardens without pesticides," said Sadler.

"It becomes too labour intensive to plant and maintain the roses. Our tools have been diminishing, we're spread out, and frankly, we have other areas in parks and recreation to care for as well."

Many roses existing in gardens with horticulturalists have been spared, and there are still public properties where the flower continues to bloom, said Sadler.

However, in the absence of pesticides, the city has introduced a variety of disease-resistant flowers called the Nell rose, named after the late Paul Martin Sr.'s wife and Windsor's official rose.

"It's a prolific, strong rose variety with a very large bloom," said Sadler.

"We're still the City of Roses. We're not losing sight of that."

Despite the drop in rose plantings and the abandonment of many test beds, it is still possible that Windsor will eventually return to its pre-pesticide ban numbers. There are more than 100 different rose varieties and hybrids that exist worldwide, and over time, Sadler says the city will experiment with new and different strains of roses in Windsor.

"It can take years to do that," he said. "It's a lengthy process that takes time."

The city's rose beds can still be seen at Jackson Park, Dieppe Gardens, Coventry Gardens, Alexander Park, Jackson Park and city hall.

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