

Fungus keeps lawns weed-free

[CBC News](#)

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An organic lawncare weed-controller developed in Saskatoon has just been approved for use in Canada.

Plant pathologist Karen Bailey discovered the fungus on a plant sample from Melfort while searching for a way to kill Canada thistle, the bane of Prairie farmers.

The discovery is important for two reasons, she said.



A fungus that can kill dandelions and thistle without harming other grasses or cereals could be on the market in two years. (CBC) "We found that since it controlled the weeds but it didn't affect grasses or cereals or some other crops as well, there would be an application as a weed-control product," she told CBC News.

Bailey saw an opportunity in cities and towns that don't use lawn chemicals, and so did Scotts, a garden products company that Bailey says will bring the fungus into commercial production.

She said she expects it to land on store shelves in a couple of years, and that's good news for environmentalists and health groups looking for non-chemical herbicides and pesticides.

The Canadian Cancer Society, for one, has been keeping an eye on three Regina parks where so-called "cosmetic" pesticides have been banned since last spring in a pilot project.

"We would really like the city to take a bigger leadership role on this, considering that five different provinces have bans on cosmetic use of pesticides," spokesman Sanela Bejic said.

It's not clear whether cosmetic pesticides cause cancer, though experts say there is a relationship between the exposure to pesticides and the development of well-known cancers, especially in children.

'We would really like the city to take a bigger leadership role on this ...'

— Sanela Bejic, Canadian Cancer Society

Regina City council discussed pesticide-free options about 10 years ago, but a complete ban didn't get passed. Now the city is using a "best practice" approach to weed out the best alternative, City of Regina spokeswoman Charmaine Neufeld said.

"Over the winter, we put a formal monitoring system in place, to monitor weed thresholds in parks. So we wanted to run the pilot again with those three parks [over the next year], do that monitoring, and make sure it's not impacting the parks in a negative way," Neufeld said.

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saskatchewaner

this fungus will prove to be harmful to something, and the ANTI's will be screaming "BAN THEM" again!

2011/07/03
at 1:08 PM ET

Rating
1

1	0
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sazooky

BC will surely BAN this fugus !!! You can only IMAGINE the cost killing all the weed in that province??

2011/06/30
at 2:02 PM ET

Rating
3

5	2
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BoomerCallahan

@Jean Sargent -

2011/06/30
at 12:23 PM ET

There is no sufficient data linking cancer in humans to 2,4-D exposure. 2,4-D is a class 2B carcinogen - officially "possibly carcinogenic to humans". Among other class 2B carcinogens: nickel; cell phones; coffee; diesel fuel; gasoline; pickled vegetables; carpentry; dry cleaning; talc-based body powders; textile manufacturing. Let's ban them all.

Rating
4

5	1
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saskboy

Peoples' aversion to dandelions is an illness in our society. Dandelions are an edible plant, basically the food with the worst marketing ever.

2011/06/30
at 10:21 AM ET

Regina council is also insane to ban dandelions and weed eating "livestock", but not herbicides and pesticides in city limits. Economic opportunities are lost because goats and sheep are not allowed to graze any area of the city, even though they are used this way in other towns in SK, and the USA.

Rating
3

10	7
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Just-me

I often dig the odd weed from the lawn , so does that make my old kitchen knife a knifecide. People with strong statements about everything often lack the facts in most circumstances. And by the way don't park your car on the lawn, because cars are still number one in killings. Get the facts and make an Adult decision! Some opinions are just terrible.

2011/06/29
at 10:57 PM ET

Rating
8

10	2
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