
EDMONTON JOURNAL

Better Edmonton growing conditions create bumper crop of weeds

BY GORDON KENT, EDMONTON JOURNAL FEBRUARY 26, 2014 5:59 PM



Improved weather means more weeds are sprouting in local parks that ban herbicides as total city pesticide use dropped last year to the lowest level in two decades.

Photograph by: Rick MacWilliam , edmontonjournal.com

EDMONTON - Improved weather means more weeds are sprouting in local parks that ban herbicides as total city pesticide use dropped last year to the lowest level in two decades.

The average number of weeds per square metre, mostly dandelions, counted at 35 Edmonton herbicide-free sites jumped from about five in 2010 to more than 20 last year, according to a city report.

The increase was mainly the result of more rain and snow following years of drought that hurt most plants in the city.

“We had a real dry period from the end of 2001 to about 2009-2010. Then we started to get more normal precip,” Doug Costigan, director of the neighbourhood parks and recreation branch, said Wednesday.

“Growing conditions just weren’t good.”

He hopes the weeds will be kept down by mowing in the no-spray parks. This designation can be requested if two-thirds of people living beside the site sign a petition asking the city not to use pesticides there.

Edmonton’s integrated pest management policy focuses on watering, composting, introducing insects to attack invasive species and other non-chemical ways to control weeds, bugs, rodents and other problems.

Last year, the city used 2,461 kilograms of pesticides, down 45 per cent since 2001 and the lowest amount in records going back to 1993.

The drop happened even as the proportion of Edmonton’s 4,232 hectares of mowed turf sprayed with herbicides roughly tripled between 2012 and 2013, to about 10 per cent, because better weather meant more weeds.

By comparison, more than half the turf was treated in the late 1990s.

“We’re basically committed to working with the community to maintain healthy neighbourhoods, and we’re reducing our reliance on pesticides,” Costigan said.

But the report, being discussed Monday by council's community services committee, indicates Edmonton faces growing numbers of pests that can damage sewers, attack trees and reduce biodiversity.

There's a concern that fewer safe, effective chemicals are available, meaning alternatives might have to be used that increase costs and require more applications.

The update was requested two years ago after councillors decided not to ban cosmetic pesticides following presentations by dozens of people on both sides of the issue.

Gideon Forman, executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, is pleased fewer chemicals are being used, but he still wants the city to forbid them in most cases on public and private property.

"It's always a good step to see reductions, but the momentum in Canada now, at least in Eastern Canada, is a ban on non-essential pesticides," he said.

"There's no health benefit from them, and the science shows again and again they're very harmful to people's health, particularly children's health."

The landscape industry has argued properly applied pesticides are safe and effective.

The report doesn't discuss whether a ban is appropriate, but city officials have opposed the idea in the past.

gkent@edmontonjournal.com

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NORAHG RESPONSE

WHO CAN AFFORD THIS #@!!% BAN NONSENSE !?!!

The city of Edmonton is putting CHILDREN AT RISK !

With PESTICIDE BANS, Green Spaces become PEST-INFESTED DANGEROUS GARBAGE DUMPS. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-44g> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-4z3>
<http://wp.me/p1jq40-7C4>

With PESTICIDE BANS, playing surfaces become THIN AND YELLOW, and OVER-RUN WITH WEEDS and INFESTED WITH INSECTS, resulting in the DISMAL DESTRUCTION OF SAFE TURF PLAYING SURFACES.

PESTICIDE BANS cause HAZARDOUS SLIPPING AND TRIPPING CONDITIONS in sports turf, and children become SERIOUSLY HURT.

Pest control products PREVENT slipping injuries on sports turf.
<http://wp.me/P1jq40-2ha>

Children need PEST-FREE SPORTS FIELDS to avoid FALLING and HURTING THEMSELVES.

It is IMPOSSIBLE for home-owners or professionals to keep their properties beautiful by using so-called Green Alternative Pesticides and Practices.

When it comes to PROHIBITION, Government Officials are THINKING TWICE about banning pesticides by looking at the experience of those jurisdictions that have suffered the hardship and STUNNINGLY EXORBITANT COSTS of this #@!!% NONSENSE ! <http://wp.me/P1jq40-43V>

WHO CAN AFFORD THIS #@!!% BAN NONSENSE ?!?!

In fact, there are REAL TRENDS AGAINST PROHIBITION.

Children NEED PEST-FREE turf to avoid HURTING THEMSELVES.

There are dozens of jurisdictions that HAVE KEPT CHILDREN SAFE by STOPPING or RESCINDING or LIMITING Anti-Pesticide PROHIBITION, or by GRANTING Professional Lawn Care businesses with an EXCEPTION STATUS.

The TREND AGAINST PROHIBITION has continued again and again.

NO ONE WANTS THIS #@!!% DANGEROUS BAN NONSENSE THAT PLACES CHILDREN AT RISK !

The following jurisdiction have KEPT CHILDREN SAFE —

Alberta (Province), Altona (Manitoba), Ashland (Oregon), Beaumont (Alberta), Belleville (Ontario), British Columbia (Province), Calgary (Alberta), Campbell River (British Columbia), Chicago (Illinois), Durango (Colorado), Edmonton (Alberta), Everett (Washington), Guelph (Ontario), Guelph-Eramosa (Ontario), Kamloops (British Columbia), Kelowna (British Columbia), Merritt (British Columbia), New Brunswick (Province), Newfoundland & Labrador (Province), Ogunquit (Maine), Port Alberni (British Columbia), Portage La Prairie (Manitoba), Quebec (Prohibition Invalidated When Lawsuit Defeated Ban), Regina (Saskatchewan), Rosland (British Columbia), Salmon Arm (British Columbia), Scarborough (Maine), Saint John's (Newfoundland & Labrador), Steinbach (Manitoba), Stuartburn (Manitoba), Vernon (British Columbia), Winkler (Manitoba).

EDMONTON MUST JOIN THE TRENDS AGAINST PESTICIDE BANS.

<http://wp.me/P1jq40-1JO>

EDMONTON CANNOT AFFORD THIS #@!!% NONSENSE !

WILLIAM H. GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G <http://pesticidetruths.com/>
<http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-2rr>