

EDMONTON JOURNAL

Edmonton close to a ban on cosmetic herbicides

BY ELISE STOLTE, EDMONTON JOURNAL JUNE 11, 2015

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Isabelle Chapados with her twin daughters Camille, left, and Rose-Aimee in Bonnie Doon Park
Photograph by: John Lucas , Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - A ban on herbicide use for anything but plants on Alberta's noxious weed list wouldn't be difficult for Edmonton to implement, say staff in a new reporting leading up to next week's debate.

"We're way closer to a ban (on cosmetic use) than many people realize," said Chris Saunders, environmental manager with the city.

City council has seen several failed attempts to pass pesticide bans since 2001. Coun. Ben Henderson sparked the most recent debate with a proposed cosmetic herbicide ban for city land, which would still allow the city to treat noxious weeds.

The ban is set to be debated at community services committee Monday.

In the late 1990s, Edmonton treated half its 4,200 hectares of turf each year using boom sprayers. Last year, that number was 3.8 per cent, mostly using truck-mounted sprayers or backpacks to spot treat noxious weeds.

Staff don't use herbicides in, or for 30 metres around, city-owned playgrounds and splash parks, but will treat other parks, sports fields and schoolyards. They mark the treated area with a yellow warning sign.

Banning use of herbicides on city land except to fight noxious weeds would cost \$870,000 for increased mowing, aerating and fertilizing, staff estimate.

By using herbicides, "we've been taking a shortcut to get a second-rate product," said Henderson. "It's about us setting a good example and saying it's not worth the risk."

Coun. Bryan Anderson said if it looks like a cosmetic ban will pass, he intends to introduce a list of exceptions to the ban, including treatment for fire safety, preventing sewer pipe obstruction, treating spots in fields and cemetery burial plots, and controlling invasive weeds.

Anti-pesticide advocates have been lobbying for a ban and different turf management practices for years.

Pediatrician and mother Isabelle Chapados is one of them. Her eight-year-old twins went out to play in Bonnie Doon Park across the street from their house recently and came back reeking of pesticides.

The twins were also carrying a small yellow warning sign telling people to stay away for 48 hours. They couldn't decipher it.

“(The herbicide) was left in the area where all the children play. There had been no warning prior,” said Chapados, who works at the Stollery Children's Hospital and in private practice.

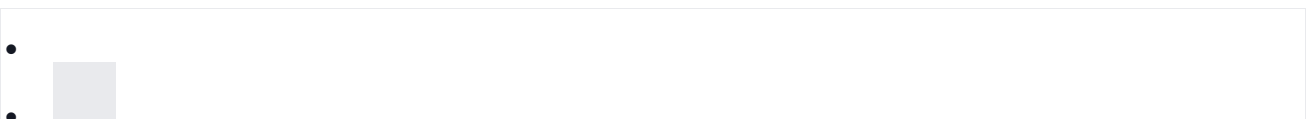
Chapados said it's difficult to prove the effects of exposure since it would be unethical to purposely expose a person and measure the results against a control group. But studies on people who have been exposed, often through their work, show links between various pesticides and non-Hodgkin lymphoma and leukemia, as well as brain damage, low birth weights and premature birth, and Parkinson's, she said, citing literature reviews in the Canadian Family Physician.

After their review, College of Family Physicians of Ontario came out against the use of cosmetic pesticides and helped convince Ontario to pass a provincewide ban in 2009.

Chapados said she wants to see the city use alternative techniques even when treating noxious weeds, as was done in Bonnie Doon Park, since treating a colonizing weed with herbicides leaves the ground bare and vulnerable to be re-infested.

Joel Beatson, executive director of Landscape Alberta, said he is disappointed no Health Canada experts have been called to speak, since they regulate the products, in essence declaring them safe when used according to the label directions.

estolte@edmontonjournal.com



Norah G Fon

NORAHG RESPONDS AGAINST COTTAM GHOST-WRITERS — CAN THEY BE TRUSTED ?!?!

Jean Cottam is an anonymous conduit for prominent pesticide-hating fanatics like Gideon Forman, Meg Sears, Michael Christie, and others. They falsely allege being somehow « familiar with the Ottawa pesticide approval scene », which is not true. These ghost-writers continually attempt to confuse and subvert the issues surrounding pest control products by using statements like « don't trust Health Canada to study pesticides ». For their own vested interest, they want to impose a prohibition against pest control products used in the urban landscape. Most have huge vested interests in perpetuating imaginary dangers about pest control products because they are paid to do so. Cottam ghost-writers have been using the Cottam name as a shield against imminent legal reprisals for fraud and conspiracy. Can Cottam ghost-writers be trusted ?!?! For more information about Cottam Ghost-Writers, go to The Pesticide Truths Web-Site ... <http://wp.me/P1jq40-2V6> WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G <http://pesticidetruths.com/>

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 1 · [Unfollow Post](#) · 22 minutes ago

•

Jean Cottam · Top Commenter · Ottawa, Ontario

This is my real name, not an alias. Most people know that. I contribute a lot to Facebook as Jean Cottam on this and other subjects. I don't see anything wrong in passing Ontario's experience to Alberta where some of my friends live.

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○

Darwin Davidiuk · Top Commenter · University of Alberta

When you drive from Ottawa to Kingston, the highway has a median filled with weeds, because Ontario has declared it an environmental sustainable area. The winds blow the weed seeds to either side causing a weed problem for the farmers on both sides of the highway. The farmers now have to use more chemicals to control those weeds. In Alberta we allow the farmers to cut the weeds or grasses in the medians, therefore reducing the need for more chemical control on their fields. We Albertans don't need advice from poorly educated environmental activists from havenot provinces like Ontario.

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Monica Helgoth · Top Commenter

Sheryl McCumsey Exactly Sheryl. I maintain a completely organic lawn and garden free of pesticides/herbicides - it involves some hard work but I get outdoors, get great exercise, enjoy fresh air and all the creatures who love visiting because I don't spray chemicals in my yard. Given that I once had an anaphylactic reaction to a herbicide, I have to be especially cautious. Unfortunately there is nothing I can do about the neighbours spraying and have to ensure all my windows are closed tight and that I don't go outside when they do. Dandelions also have wonderful medicinal properties - maybe that is why there are so many of them

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Norah G Fon

NORAHG RESPONDS AGAINST SHERYL McCUMSEY — SHE IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED !

So, all of a sudden, McCumsey is implying that she possesses magic information that is somehow being withheld from EVERY regulatory agency in the world. McCumsey is NO expert ! She has NO expertise, NO training, and NO background regarding pest control products. McCumsey is a mere student in MASSAGE THERAPY and FOOTWEAR. Her opinions carry NO CREDIBILITY and are WORTHLESS. Additionally, McCumsey wrongly asserts that dandelions are effective for the aeration of the soil. Again, she has NO CREDIBILITY with WORTHLESS advice about turf management. McCumsey is NOT TO BE TRUSTED ! McCumsey conveniently forgets that pest control products are SCIENTIFICALLY-SAFE, and WILL NOT CAUSE HARM TO PEOPLE, ANIMALS, BEES, OR THE ENVIRONMENT. We are the National Organization Responding Against HUJE that conspire to destroy the Green space and other industries (NORAH G). As a non-profit and independent organization, we are environmentalists who are dedicated to reporting about NON-EXPERT PESTICIDE-HATING FANATICS, as well as the work of RESPECTED and HIGHLY RATED EXPERTS who promote ENVIRONMENTAL REALISM and PESTICIDE TRUTHS. <http://wp.me/p1jq40-8DV> Get the latest details at <http://pesticidetruths.com/> WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G

McCUMSEY -- TERRORIZING NEIGHBOURS (Report & Audio Recordings)

<http://pesticidetruths.com/2014/03/05/audio-sheryl-mccumsey-extreme-activist-neighbor-making-us-sick-with-round-up-university-of-guelph-industry-shills/>

McCUMSEY -- FACT-LESS FEAR-MONGERING ABOUT PESTICIDES & BEE COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER (Report & Video Recording)

<http://pesticidetruths.com/2014/03/05/youtube-anti-pesticide-enviro-terror-sheryl-mccumsey-factless-fearmongering/>

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Norah G Fon

TO HELGOTH -- You DID NOT have any reaction to a herbicide. You concocted this story in order to validate your conspiracy against pest control products. Moreover, we only have your word that your maintenance practices are successful. Organic Pesticide-Free Maintenance is promoted by people like yourself with UNVERIFIABLE SUCCESS STORIES ! And finally, so what if dandelion has alleged medicinal properties ?!?! If you like dandelions, then, good for you. We have NO objection to YOUR choice of life-style, which, in this case, is a clear preference to live in an environment that looks like a garbage dump. However, we DO object to the imposition of YOUR choice on the majority of the community that DOES NOT want to live in this manner.

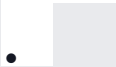
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Norah G Fon

ABOUT COTTAM - COTTAM is actually a designation for a group of Anti-Pesticide Ghost-Writers whose PERSONAL MANDATES are to DECEIVE the public ANONYMOUSLY. McCumsey herself may have also joined this group.

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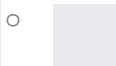
Jack DeRoo · Top Commenter

Our approach to using selective herbicides is part of the issue - only doing the playing surface plus a meter or two allows the weeds to thrive on the perimeter and constantly re-establish themselves in the play area. A full broadcast over all turf areas would eliminate most of the weeds and likely eliminate the need for an additional broadcast application, possibly for a year or two. Spot treatments would likely still be needed to contain outbreaks.

Let's not kid ourselves - without irrigation and mowing every 48 hours, our playing fields will be overrun with dandelions in short order. We can't afford either of those solutions.

I'm not against reducing non-essential pesticide usage, but I think we may have shot ourselves in the foot in how we went about doing it.

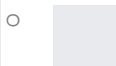
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Jean Cottam · Top Commenter · Ottawa, Ontario

This crazy prejudice against dandelions has got to go. What if fields are overrun with dandelions, would this be the end of the world? We in Ottawa have been pesticide free on our sportsfields still during the previous century, yet no one makes a fuss about this any more.

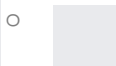
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Matthew Shaw · Owner at Self-Employed

Jean Cottam you don't even live here and this is an alias - paid lobbyist!

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Jack DeRoo · Top Commenter

Jean - there are some very significant differences between the climate in Edmonton and Ontario.

We have far less humidity as a result of being landlocked. Warm spells are warm and dry and really puts a strain on grassy areas that aren't irrigated, which is pretty much most of our fields. This basically creates ideal conditions for dandelions to setup shop.

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Gaston Synnott · Top Commenter · Works at Travailleur autonome

There is no such thing as 'essential pesticides usage, Jack. It's about old perceptions , entrenched habits and choices . It will put a strain on an industry ? Yes it will and the city will get over it .

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o

Mark Oldman · Top Commenter

Matthew Shaw Um. That makes no sense whatever.

One - A paid lobbyist for what? Big Dandelion? There is an herbicide industry, but there is no industry of "not selling herbicides" to hire lobbyists.

And two - a paid lobbyist has better things to do than hang out in newspaper comment sections nobody reads anyway.

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o

Norah G Fon

TO COTTAM GHOST-WRITER - Clearly, whoever writes under the name Cottam does not care about children. If Cottam is truly concerned about children, then a pesticide ban is out-of-the-question. Pesticide bans create hazardous slipping and tripping conditions in sports turf. In fact, with pesticide bans, children are actually at high risk of slipping and tripping and becoming seriously hurt. Pest control products actually prevent slipping injuries on sports turf. Children need weed-free baseball mounds and runs to avoid tripping and hurting themselves. Without conventional pest control products, playing surfaces become thin and yellow, and over-run with weeds and infested with insects, resulting in the dismal destruction of turf playing surfaces. Moreover, green spaces in Ottawa have become dangerous and pest-infested garbage dumps. Cottam is misleading the public by alleging that no one objects to this life-style choice.

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Norah G Fon

TO OLDMAN - Anti-pesticide & environmental-terrorist organization are PROFITING on the issue of prohibition. They are PROFITING in the MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. Anti-pesticide & environmental-terrorist organizations, like the ones operating in Alberta, serve no useful or beneficial purpose to society, wasting tax-payer money operating as mere government opponents, and do not deserve charity tax-exempt statuses. They exist for one reason and one only ... and that is to make ENVIRO-PROFIT. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-1IE> Their non-profit charity statuses are being investigated and revoked. Even Greenpeace has lost its charity status in several jurisdictions, including Canada. <http://tinyurl.com/pn9nh45> <http://tinyurl.com/okcvrl3> Anti-pesticide & environmental-terrorist organizations must suffer the scrutiny of the government and the spotlight of taxation agencies. The public is directed to complain about these organizations by contacting business, fund-raising, government, and taxation agencies ! Their non-profit charity statuses must be investigated and hopefully revoked. Everyone must complain, complain, complain. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-1PE> Extraordinary crimes by anti-pesticide & environmental-terrorist organizations are AVENGED by advocacy, complaints, government actions, and legal challenges, and other non-violent activities, by extraordinary people. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-6vM>

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Norah G Fon

TO SYNNOTT - Edmonton will NOT get over it since prohibition will convert its green spaces into dangerous and pest-infested garbage dumps.

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Norah G Fon

Yayy Shaw ! Cottam is the name of a group of enviro-ghost-writers who are paid-for-profit to enrage and alarm the public about pest control products.

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Kristine Kowalchuk · Top Commenter · University of Alberta

Stating leaving dandelions will cost the city an extra \$870,000 is, of course, ridiculous, as the health care and environmental costs of spraying are far higher. This is the kind of limited, short-term thinking our city and society need to move away from.

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Norah G Fon

TO KOWALCHUK - The STUNNINGLY EXORBITANT COST OF PROHIBITION, across the nation, is AT LEAST 23,000,000 DOLLARS. In fact, the CARNAGE IS MUCH HIGHER ... IN THE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. One reason for the STUNNINGLY EXORBITANT COSTS is that it is IMPOSSIBLE for municipalities to keep their properties BEAUTIFUL AND SAFE by using so-called Green Alternative Pesticides and Practices. There are NO viable, efficacious, economical, or low-risk alternatives to replace conventional pest control products. Green Alternative Pesticides are BOGUS and DISMAL FAILURES — they DO NOT WORK and they are NOT INNOVATIVE products. Overall, Green Alternative Pesticides are INEFFECTIVE, INADEQUATE, HIGH-RISK, MORE TOXIC, and STUNNINGLY EXPENSIVE !

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Jean Cottam · Top Commenter · Ottawa, Ontario

The alleged necessity for the fluoridation of drinking water is a red herring. In my own case I had no more cavities when I lived in the fluoride-free Province of Quebec than after I moved to Toronto.

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○

Else Marie Smart · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

It is NOT necessary and we are being poisoned. Fluoride is toxic waste that the big corporations could not get rid of so they sold the idea to municipalities of adding it to drinking water to prevent cavities - it doesn't do that - but the myth is so ingrained and strong that it is hard to eradicate - yet Calgary did eradicate fluoride and many other communities across North America because they realized the truth

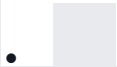
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○

Marvin Roger Hasenbein · [Follow](#) · Top Commenter · Minister at Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster

Else Marie Smart Yeah, I quit drinking city water at 45 years old and got my first cavity 3 months later...so started drinking city water again....surprise surprise no cavities.fluoride indeed prevents cavities

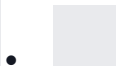
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Gord Crawford

Not sure why there are references to pesticides in this article - last time I checked they don't do anything to weeds.

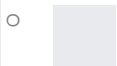
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Else Marie Smart · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

Now hoping the city bans fluoride, a known poison, from our drinking water

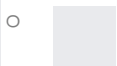
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Will Maitner · Top Commenter · Help Desk/Tech Support at Team Industrial Services

Lol! You're joking right?

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Chris Dawn · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

Uhhhh, I'd better become a dentist if they do. Any issues attributed to fluoride are not from the low levels present in our drinking water - levels that drastically reduced tooth decay prevalence for decades, but are instead from the additional concentrated doses in things such as mouthwash and toothpaste. When something has a beneficial quality companies tend to all jump on board and overdo it (ie: antibacterials).

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 2 · 20 hours ago

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Else Marie Smart · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

Will Maitner not kidding - please read up on both sides of fluoride and the history and make your own decision - I have and its POISON and should not be ingested

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 12 hours ago

o



Else Marie Smart · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

Chris Dawn Please educate yourself on fluoride and its history and decide if you want yourself and your family poisoned with every glass of water. Plus, fluoride has not proven to be effective in mouthwash or toothpaste.

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Jean Cottam · Top Commenter · Ottawa, Ontario

Myself a paid lobbyist! I never heard anything so crazy. I and an 85 year-old activist. Paid lobbyists seldom come that old. Pardon my ignorance pertaining to dry conditions in Alberta. It would seem to me that this would be helpful in eradicating dandelions rather than vice versa. Surely your drought would affect them adversely.

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o



Mark Oldman · Top Commenter

Not really - dandelions benefit on the whole from dry spells, in that they suffer less from drought than the grasses they're often competing against. Those deep tap roots that are so hard to pull also mean they have better access to deeper ground water than grass's shallow root systems.

The grass in my front lawn right now is fairly yellow/brown and spindly, but the dandelions are nice and green still. That means the dandelions have a great opportunity to spread their leaves and shade out the grass, giving them more advantage next time it rains.

I'm with you on your main point though - why care so much about dandelions? They're not poisonous, or painful to step on like thistles and such.

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o

Norah G Fon

TO OLDMAN - With a pesticide bans in Edmonton, green spaces will become pest-infested dangerous garbage dumps. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-44g> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-4z3> <http://wp.me/p1jq40-7C4> With a pesticide ban, 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. By imposing a reckless pesticide ban, Edmonton is placing children at risk ! 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 safe and beautiful by using so-called green alternative pesticides and practices. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-24g>

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Norah G Fon

ABOUT COTTAM GHOST-WRITERS - These Ghost-Writers continually attempt to CONFUSE and SUBVERT the issues surrounding pest control products by using statements like « don't trust Health Canada to study pesticides ». For their own VESTED INTEREST, they want to IMPOSE a PROHIBITION against pest control products used in the Urban Landscape. Most have HUGE VESTED INTERESTS IN PERPETUATING IMAGINARY DANGERS about pest control products because THEY ARE PAID TO DO SO.

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Tim Patrie · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

"would cost \$870,000 for increased mowing, aerating and fertilizing" - ha - the city finally just mowed the grass in my area for the first time on the weekend, a far cry from the 7-10 days I had previously heard. It would be a miracle if they actually mowed it as often as they say they do.

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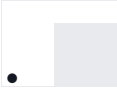
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Jack DeRoo · Top Commenter

That number is likely very under estimated. To keep dandelions from spreading, one needs to keep them from going to seed. That's every couple days, especially since the city mowers mulch the clippings. If you leave them longer than a few days, all the mowers do is spread the seeds in the mulch. This is why our current system is also failing - by not doing the borders of the sports fields, the mowers are reseeding the soccer fields as they mow.

If this ban passes, it will be in effect for a couple years until all the fields are ruined, the maintenance budget goes through the roof and council repeals it in favour of better signage/notification when herbicides are used.

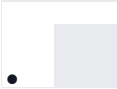
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Marvin Roger Hasenbein · [Follow](#) · Top Commenter · Minister at Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster

If dandelions were my only problem, I wouldn't have a problem

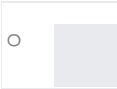
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Will Maitner · Top Commenter · Help Desk/Tech Support at Team Industrial Services

Love how it's the city that gets to pick which weeds are good and which are bad.

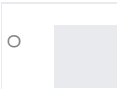
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Chris Dawn · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

It's actually the Alberta government that is responsible for that in the form of the Alberta Weed Control Act. If you read up on that you'll see the rationale behind it all.

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Chris Dawn · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

Sheryl - I was simply referring to the governing body responsible for classifying which weeds are considered noxious and which ones aren't. I wasn't commenting on which jurisdiction was responsible for implementing that policy.

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John Spencer

Pesticides (yes this includes herbicides too) are one of the most stringently controlled products in Canada and are regulated by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). The PMRA employs over 300 scientists including biologists, chemists, toxicologists, epidemiologists, plant pathologists, scientists and entomologists for the sole purpose of evaluating pest control products. If the PMRA's scientists consider that the risks to human health or the environment are not acceptable, a registration will not be granted. And yes I know, all you anti-pesticide advocates will start posting your vitriol towards Heath Canada because they don't share your paranoia!

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○

Norah G Fon

Yayy Spencer ! :-)

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Derrick Forsythe · Top Commenter · Works at Government of Alberta

What about golf courses- people are paying market rates already for questionable quality - dandelions in the fairways isn't going to help deliver value to these assets

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Chris Dawn · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

Applying "herbicides" certainly doesn't create healthy turf. However, a golf course benefits from high levels of irrigation that is beneficial to healthy turf development - something that most public turf does not get. It's a bit of a catch 22.

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Chris Dawn · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

Sheryl, the catch would be the copious amounts of water it would require to foster growing conditions on all city lands that approximate those found on a well-kept front lawn or golf course. Dandelions are a generalist species and thrive in suboptimal conditions. It is difficult to maintain those optimal conditions for healthy turf growth on a large scale. I'm not advocating the use of herbicides. Simply evaluating both sides Sheryl...

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Derrick Forsythe · Top Commenter · Works at Government of Alberta

Having golfed at a city course every summer since 2000 - during that time there were periods where treatments were suspended - fairways became overrun

The city is infamous for not putting enough resources back into these facilities - finally after consistent complaints from public treatments were reinstated and the dandelions were beaten back

As for turf management - there's a lot of green on the fairways not a lot of which has been grass historically - some progress has been made in recent years removing the chickweed or whatever we have growing but overseeding for example was deemed too expensive

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Chris Dawn · Top Commenter · Edmonton, Alberta

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Norah G Fon

TO FORSYTHE - Over-seeding will NOT work against chickweed.

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