

Pesticide ban blamed for Winnipeg's excess weeds, dandelions

City experimenting with alternatives to chemical pesticides but costs are much higher

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Dandelions have overrun parts of Wellington Crescent, and according to the city's manager of open spaces, a provincial pesticide ban is to blame. (Leif Larsen / CBC)

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Dandelions Have Overrun Many Of Winnipeg's Green Spaces, and the city's manager of parks and open spaces said a provincial pesticide ban is to blame.

Boulevards on Wellington Crescent are full of the puffballs, so much so that it is hard to see the grass beneath.

According to Dave Domke, Winnipeg's manager of parks and open spaces, the reason there are more dandelion flowers is because of Manitoba's new ban on cosmetic pesticides, which came into effect this year.

The ban limits the use of traditional chemical pesticides on private lawns and on grounds around hospitals, sidewalks, schools and daycares.

But Domke stressed that while there might be more flowers, there aren't actually more plants than in previous years.

"The plants have always been in the ground," said Domke.

He went on to explain that weed control efforts in the past really prevented the flowers from sprouting, but the root systems remained.

"So there aren't really any more dandelions, [but] people might have been seeing them a bit more," he added.

Domke said more flowers and seeds this year could create a long term issue.

"As the weed and seed population grows in the city we're likely to see more dandelion [flowers]," said Domke. That could mean even more dandelion flowers in the years to come.

City tries out alternative

Domke said the city is trying out an alternative pesticide, but the new product is eight times more expensive than the banned chemicals.

The tests are taking place at Vince Leah Park, and the new product seems to be effective when used properly.

But Domke said it's probably not going to be used across the city due to the cost.

He added it may be used in some "targeted areas" but said it would be up to Winnipeg city council to decide what those areas are.