

# Higher Cost Follows New Herbicide Use In Morden

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*Part of the Integrated Pest Management Plan includes mowing grass higher in Morden to bolster the root system of the grass*

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Morden city council resolved at the monthly meeting, May 30, to increase funding to the City of Morden's Integrated Pest Management Plan which will raise the budget to \$150,000.

That means broad-leaf weeds will be tackled with more frequent application of a government approved herbicide called Fiesta. Council resolved a treatment plan for more than 60 acres of City of Morden property, which includes some parks and boulevards on main thoroughfares throughout Morden.

"This year was particularly bad for broad-leaf weeds," said Morden parks manager Shawn Dias. "We [saw] very dry conditions in May, which is very abnormal, so the grass is less vigorous when it starts growing, which allows the weeds to get better established."

Before Manitoba enacted the [Non-Essential Pesticide Use Regulation](#) in December 2014, the city of Morden was using a produce called Par III which was found to be effective in killing weeds like thistles and dandelions. So effective, that Morden only applied it once in two years.

However, the product was mildly toxic to humans.

"It has certain chemicals," said Dr. Denis Fortier, vice-president of medical services for the new Southern Regional Health Authority, "that could potentially, with accumulated levels in one's body, cause some health related risks in the long term. I'll say right off the bat, those risks are quite low for the average person."

Dr. Fortier is an award-winning physician, he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012, and the Doctors Manitoba Health Physician of the Year Award in 2013.

He said that Fiesta seemed to be a safer product overall, but admitted that he was not an expert on chemical herbicides.

"The toxicology tests," said Dr. Fortier, "show very low risks of health concern if used properly."

Fiesta is an iron-based herbicide that will require more frequent application, which adds to the increased cost to the City.

Dr. Fortier emphasized that, in general herbicides are considerably less concerning to a human's health than pesticides.

"Quite low, in fact," he said.