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Spring dandelion invasion in full bloom

By David Fraser, Calgary Herald May 21, 2013

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Cyclists ride past a cluster of dandelions on Memorial Drive on Tuesday. Calgary's greenspaces have turned yellow with the flowering weed over the past few days.

Photograph by: Colleen De Neve , Calgary Herald

It's not easy being yellow.

Dandelions are once again sprouting up around Calgary, prompting the city and lawn-care specialists to again declare war on the broad leaf weed.

The city doesn't keep a census on dandelion growth from year to year, but Phil Lo, chief operating officer for Weedman Calgary, has had a busy week fielding calls from residents.

"I don't think it's any higher than previous years, but it's normal around this time for the dandelions to pop out of the ground and for us to get a lot more calls," said Lo, whose company sold 20 pest-control packages by noon Tuesday.

The city hasn't sprayed weeds for cosmetic purposes since city council adopted its integrated pest management plan in 1998.

“We don’t go out and say, ‘Oh, dandelions! That’s the one place we’re going to go out and treat,’ ” said James Borrow, head of integrated pest management for the city.

Instead, the city monitors the total amount of broad leaf weeds — including plantain, creeping bell flower and others — in specific locations and then sprays if there are too many.

Borrow said the city can only spray a portion of park sites in any given year.

“It may take us anywhere from three to five or possibly eight years to get to all of the park sites in Calgary,” he said, adding the city won’t be checking the areas treated last year. The city does a post-treatment assessment to make sure the spraying was effective.

Kelly Otto, owner of Green Oasis Calgary, said once a dandelion problem is under control it’s easy to maintain a healthy lawn. The root of residential dandelion infestations often stems from the wind-borne seeds blowing from untreated areas of the city.

“It’s all the other areas that are not maintained that are the problem,” said Otto.

Over the past few years, Otto’s company has grown because of the city’s integrated pest management plan.

“There are communities (that) pay us directly to step up the maintenance and clean things up a little bit better than the city has been maintaining,” he said.

In 2010, the Alberta government reclassified dandelions by removing them from the list of noxious weeds, meaning city bylaw officers cannot ticket homeowners for the yellow flowers blooming in their yards, unless the weeds grow taller than 15 centimetres.

Taming the yellow devil doesn’t have to be left solely to lawn-care specialists and city workers, though. Residents can restrain their dandelion population by keeping healthy grass. Regularly cutting it to a healthy length — as in, not too short — will keep your lawn from becoming stressed.

Feeding your grass a suitable dose of fertilizer and irrigating it should help stave off an ugly dandelion invasion.

If you don’t have the stomach for weed-control, head to the River Café and Restaurant. Chefs at the Prince’s Island Park café serve up dandelions.

They use dandelion honey imported from the Okanogan to compliment dishes, including as brine on a brand-new chicken dish.

Whether you’re keen on killing the weed, eating it or picking them as a low-budget bouquet for your loved one, dandelion mating season is in full spring.

With files from Sherri Zickefoose, Calgary Herald

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I never understood this. I LIKE dandelions.

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You'll like them a whole lot less when you're trying to keep a nice green lawn. :(

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It may not be long before far-leftists like Druh Farrell takes this to the next logical step and stops spraying mosquitos, preferring instead to "educate" us about the benefits of mosquito soup, and how mosquitos are our misunderstood friend.

Do your job Druh! Spray dandelions, keep cars moving, and stop trying to social engineer! You're supposed to be a city councillor, not a leftist dictator.

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They're an early flower for my bees.

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You're a beekeeper?

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If you can't beat 'em, eat 'em. Dandelions are have antiinflammatory properties, and tastes much like arugula.

[Reply](#) · [2](#) · [Like](#) · [Follow Post](#) · 6 hours ago**Robin Jeffries** · Canadian University College

they also make a very nice medicinal tea :)

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