

Weed-free lawn not worth risks

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Re: "Pesticide ban tough to enforce; Invasive plants a headache for city official," The Journal, Oct. 23.

All municipal cosmetic pesticide bans so far have been aimed at the treatment of harmless weeds. Invasive weeds are allowed to be sprayed if no other method can be found to control them. Therefore, city staff have no reason to fear a ban would take away their ability to deal with invasive species.

However, Edmonton's continued use of pesticides may prove more than a headache for its citizens. It could be lethal.

I think Edmontonians would be surprised to realize that bans exist in Quebec, Ontario, PEI, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia (2011) and British Columbia. The Prairie provinces are notable by their absence. There are now 168 Canadian municipalities with bans in place and 79.6 per cent of Canadians are protected from unwanted pesticide exposure.

These municipalities have concluded there are health detriments to the continued use of cosmetic pesticides. This conclusion has also been reached by the Ontario College of Family Physicians.

Sadly, no Albertans are protected from these negative health effects. Instead, our children are walking to and from school each spring and fall, through air still redolent of the smell of 2,4-D, from the last application of pesticide by a homeowner, lawn care company, or indeed the city. What is the price of a weed-free lawn?

According to the cancer society survey, eight of our councillors are supportive of a pesticide ban.

There are good alternatives to pesticide use, which may require a little more effort, but who could not argue for the health benefits to ourselves, our children and environment?

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