



Pesticide and herbicide policy brought to Edmonton council

BY DAVE LAZZARINO, EDMONTON SUN

FIRST POSTED: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 04, 2015 04:50 PM MST | UPDATED: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 04, 2015 04:59 PM MST

SUN+



White clover (also known as Dutch clover) is blasted by Killex on an Edmonton front yard Monday July 7, 2014. While this clover is an eatable plant for most yard owners find the fast growing plant an annoying thing to have. If not control, clover can take over a yard in just a couple of years. Tom Braid/Edmonton Sun/QMI Agency

Edmonton lawmakers are going to take a closer look at dealing with pests and weeds, but some see the move as nothing more than a nuisance.

"We've been through this I don't know how many times before," said Coun. Mike Nickel following a brief debate over whether pesticide and herbicide bans should be addressed at a committee level. "The fact of the matter is I think we have a good policy in place right now.

"I have not received from my office any demands and I'm the Communities in Bloom champion," said Nickel, a sentiment that managed to get some traction from a few other councillors during a Tuesday council meeting.

But Coun. Ben Henderson, who brought the question to council to begin with, feels otherwise.

"There may still be some questions that some councillors have and it's never a bad thing to get more information," said Henderson.

As it stands, the city's pesticide policy allows for the use of herbicides and pesticides in public areas to deal with some non-invasive weeds and pests like mosquitoes. But the aim is already to reduce those chemicals as much as possible.

"A variety of preventive and non-chemical pest management strategies are used or considered before using the least toxic approved pesticide," the policy reads. "Approved pesticide applications will be used in circumstances where alternative practices or products have failed to manage the pest."

The city also has a list of 45 different sites, including parks and schools, that were declared "herbicide-free" areas in 2004.

"We try to do as much as possible to avoid using things and even when we do use it, we try to use the least amount possible and the most appropriate product," said Mike Jenkins, the city's biological sciences technician, adding less-harmful weeds like dandelions aren't targeted at all.

Henderson feels more can be done, especially in places where the weeds don't pose a serious threat.

"I think we're taking unnecessary risks," said Henderson when asked the danger in keeping the legislation as it is.

Elisabeth Beaubien is a member of Pesticide-Free Edmonton who has been spent years trying to change the city's policy to no avail.

"I think it's a business issue. There's a lot of pressure from companies that want to keep selling chemical. But what they've discovered in other parts of Canada where they've had these bylaws passed is that there's a sudden upsurge in activity in the lawn-care industry," she said.

Both Henderson and Beaubien agree that noxious weeds have to be kept in check -- a mandatory measure set out by the province's Weed Control Act -- but the city should do it differently.

The city's policy, which only deals with city-owned land, is expected to be revisited at the community services committee in the spring.

david.lazzarino@sunmedia.ca

@SUNDaveLazz

Free Antivirus Download 

eset.com/Download-Antivirus

Brand New 2015 Version - Try Free. Trusted by
100+ Million Users

