

Chicago Tribune

120 pounds of weeds removed during Dandelion Pull At Knoch Park



Nine-year-old Esther Rossi pulled dandelions Thursday from areas around the picnic tables at Knoch Park, a Naperville Park District property that doesn't use chemicals to eliminate weeds. (Diane Moca / Naperville Sun)
Diane Moca Naperville Sun

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Competitive weeding is a thing?

It was Thursday night when two dozen participants turned up at Naperville's Knoch Park to participate in a Dandelion Pull contest.

"I wanted to do something with people getting active and practicing what we teach," said Ruth Kerzee, executive director of Midwest Pesticide Action

Center, which organized the event. "It's a way to start the conversation about pesticide use. Get your grass off drugs, like a detox for grass. (One way is) physical removal. Also aerating and overseeding and watering correctly will go a long way to choke out weeds."

Such practices are used by the Naperville Park District, which helped run the Dandelion Pull at one of its eight organic parks being maintained with natural products, Kerzee said. In just under an hour, about 24 people were able to remove more than 120 pounds of weeds from an area around the picnic tables across from the playground at Knoch Park.

Esther Rossi said she came to the Dandelion Pull because she "wanted to win a prize." The 9-year-old, a student at Sts. Peter and Paul School in Naperville, was part of a team that took third place in the timed contest. Her team filled their bag with nine pounds in six minutes and were awarded with two Patagonia tote bags. The Rose family took second place after digging up 12 pounds; they took home a bag of organic fertilizer. Two 14-year-old boys from Madison Junior High School — Ian Olsen and Carlos Aispuro — took first place after unearthing 14 pounds of weeds. They went home with two extra large weeders to use on their own lawn.

"Part of our effort in spring is to do things to engage people and have conversation about what they can do on their lawns that's environmentally friendly," Kerzee said. She noted that more lawn care services are offering ways to manage yards with natural methods that don't include chemicals, which can be harmful to the environment and people.

"If there's conventional chemicals being applied — Round Up or 2,4-D — they are highly toxic to aquatic species and pollinators," Kerzee said. The organic compound 2,4-D is a herbicide that has been classified by the World Health Organization as a possible carcinogen that could cause cancer in humans, though expert opinions vary. Kerzee said weed-killing chemicals end up in storm drain runoff that flows into lakes and rivers "and ends up in the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. All chemicals impact the ecosystems in the soil. Fertilizers add salt to the soil. That's bad for the environment. We're living in an experiment. These products have not been around for a lifetime. The chemicals are designed to be poisonous."



Tracy Olsen, of Naperville, left, of the Young Men's Service League, pulled weeds alongside Carl Gorra, Naperville Park District parks operations manager, Thursday night during the Dandelion Pull at Knoch Park in Naperville. (Diane Moca / Naperville Sun)

Rossi's mother, Amy, said she she agreed that lawn herbicides "are not good for us or anybody else. We don't (use them). I don't believe in it. If (a yard) looks perfect, you're putting too many chemicals on it. I'm old-school. It's better."

People who want a neatly manicured lawn can take small steps that make a big difference, Kerzee said, such as moving away from broad application of pesticides on a large piece of land like an entire front yard or back yard. "It's not good for pets, pollinators, people. Just use spot treatment. Regular mowing is often a big one" to eliminate weeds without chemicals if you lop off the dandelions at the right time, she said. She recommended homeowners allow dandelions to grow to the yellow-flower stage, which is "good for pollinators, and cut them down before they go to seed."

Sending kids into a yard to get dirty by pulling weeds or encouraging adults to get exercise and fresh air by gardening can help eliminate the problem too. "I liked picking them," said Esther Rossi. "It was a nice event, sort of therapeutic," Amy Rossi added.

The event encouraged participants to sign a Midwest Grows Green pledge and featured two Naperville Park District tractors on display that run on 100 percent vegetable oil.

Park district volunteer manager Lynette Hoole said it was the “first time we’ve done it. We’d love to do it again.”

The Dandelion Pull was part of Chicago Grows Green Week, seven days of educational activities throughout the Chicago area promoting landscape maintenance without chemicals.



Three-year-old Adalyne Alexenko, of Naperville, puts a dandelion in a bag Thursday night during the Dandelion Pull at Knoch Park in Naperville. (Diane Moca / Naperville Sun)

Diane Moca is a freelance reporter for the Naperville Sun.

RESIDENTS BECOME COTTON-PICKERS BECAUSE OF MANUAL WEED PICKING !

If someone arbitrarily dislikes conventional pest control products, that is THEIR choice. We have NO objection to THEIR choice of life-style, which, in this case, is a clear preference for the back-breaking practice of Manual Weed Picking. But, no one, except for THEM, wants this #@!!% nonsense of Manual Weed Picking, even though this practice DOES NOT WORK ! Moreover, we DO object to the imposition of THEIR choice on the majority of the community that DOES NOT want to perform lawn maintenance like COTTON-PICKERS. If a small minority of highly-motivated fanatics want to spend 40 to 50 hours plus per week pulling weeds from their properties, that's their prerogative. IMPOSING that life-style on everyone else for NO good reason IS UNFAIR. Besides, Manual Weed Picking is TOTALLY INEFFECTIVE. There is NO DOUBT that it will be IMPOSSIBLE for home-owners or maintenance professionals to keep their properties weed-free, safe, and beautiful by using practices like weed-pulling, raised mowing height, and soil aeration. Without conventional pest control products, playing surfaces become thin and yellow, and over-run with weeds and infested with insects, resulting in the dismal destruction of safe turf playing surfaces and turning them into garbage dumps. Who wants to live in #@!!% pest-infested garbage dumps just because a small group of fanatics seek to impose needless pesticide bans ?!?! Forget about Manual Weed Picking and forget about being a COTTON-PICKER !

<http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/manual-weed-picking/>

<http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/carnage-leading-to-garbage-dumps/>

<http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/carnage-leading-to-garbage-dump-green-spaces-photo-gallery/>

MANUAL WEED PICKING KILLS PEOPLE !

On June 28th, 2011, an Ontario resident did not realize that hand-weeding a toxic noxious weed on his property would contribute to his death. This resident was ultimately doomed since the safest and most effective method of controlling toxic noxious weeds was arbitrarily and needlessly prohibited by government officials. Contact with this toxic noxious weed resulted in severe burns to his hands and arms, eventually forcing him to be hospitalized — ultimately, he died. Unfortunately, government officials had imposed a lunatic anti-pesticide prohibition. The death was the fault of manual weed picking and prohibition !

<http://pesticidetruths.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Force-Of-Nature-CARNAGE-2011-07-10-DEATH-PROHIBITION-Man-Dies-Because-of-Prohibition-Ontario-pdf-300-dpi.pdf>

THE EFFECT OF 2,4-D ON HEALTH IS A MYTH !

There are NO pest control products that are known or probable carcinogens. It is a MYTH to believe that pest control products somehow cause cancer. There are THOUSANDS OF DEATHS per year from KNOWN CANCER-CAUSING SUBSTANCES such as cigarette smoke and alcohol. There is NOT ONE KNOWN CANCER DEATH from the proper use of pest control products used in the Urban Landscape. Even Canadian Cancer Society's own web-sites state, repeatedly, that scientific research does NOT provide a conclusive link between pest control products and cancer. EPA, Health Canada, and other science-based national regulatory agencies have clearly demonstrated that 2,4-D is LESS TOXIC THAN Aspirin, baking soda, caffeine, cannabis, nicotine, table salt, and Tylenol. 2,4-D is NO MORE TOXIC THAN ethanol (an edible beverage constituent in beer, wine, and other intoxicating beverages), mouthwash (Listerine), and Vitamin C. 2,4-D is scientifically-safe, practically non-toxic, will cause NO harm, will NOT cause cancer, and will NOT cause irreversible damage if consumed orally. The probable lethal dose for a person ingesting the concentrated form of 2,4-D is ONE LITRE, the volume of an entire milk carton. By comparison, drinking SIX LITRES of water, a fluid that is seemingly harmless, can lead to water poisoning or dilutional hyponatremia, which is a potentially fatal disturbance in brain functions.

<http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/canadian-cancer-society-no-conclusive-link-between-pesticides-and-cancer/>

<http://pesticidetruths.com/2016/08/30/a-look-at-safety-environment-facts-pest-control-products-are-safe-for-kids-slide-show-2016-08-31/>

WE SPEAK THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT MANUAL WEED PICKING FROM AN INDEPENDENT PERSPECTIVE !

We are the National Organization Responding Against HUJE that conspire to destroy the Green space and other industries (NORAHG). As a non-profit and independent organization, we are environmentalists who are dedicated to reporting about truth-challenged pesticide-hating fanatics (HUJE) who conspire to destroy businesses that are dependent on the use of safe and effective conventional pest control products. We also report on the work of several highly-rated leading experts who have recognized expertise, training, and background in matters concerning pest control products, and who promote environmental realism and pesticide truths.

We dare to defy the pesticide-hating fanatics by exploring the whole truth from an independent perspective on The Pesticide Truths Web-Site ...

<http://pesticidetruths.com/> If you wish to receive free reports on issues that concern you, please contact us at ... force.of.de.nature@gmail.com WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G