

COUNTY OF ST. PAUL

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Our Mission - To create desirable rural experiences



County Agriculture News (CAN)

Spring 2021

Roadside Spraying Program

The ASB's Roadside Spraying Program helps to control weeds and brush along the County's roads in the right-of-way (ROW). Roadsides are commonly sprayed every three to four years to promote grass growth and to keep trees and other weeds from obscuring the sightline while driving. The roadside spraying program is part of an integrated approach to keeping roads in good condition year 'round.



If you are worried about herbicides being applied to the roadside adjacent to your property, we encourage you to contact the County with your concerns. All of our operators are licensed by Alberta Environment.

Any property owner who does not want a roadside sprayed by their property must *contact ASB yearly* to fill out a **Weed and Brush Control Agreement** before the program begins in mid-May.

The owner will then be responsible for controlling all of the weeds and brush in the roadside. The County will supply the landowner with signs to post so the area can be visibly seen. If you are mowing the roadside it will not be sprayed so an agreement may not be necessary. Please make an appointment with the ASB staff before coming in to sign an agreement.

Clearview and Aspect are the two main herbicides used in the County's ROW The herbicides the County uses are safe for you and the environment. These are selective herbicides that leave the grass and control most trees and broadleaved weeds. They are also very common agricultural products used to promote grass growth in pastures.

Richardson's Ground Squirrels

The County's Ag Service Department, as a certificated government agent, sells strychnine bait products to farmers for the control of Richardson's Ground Squirrels.

The program runs in the spring when the ground squirrels first emerge. Spring is the best time to use baits when food sources are scarce. The program continues into the summer.

The County sells Strychnine for \$13/bottle. Health Canada announced on March 4, 2020 that the strychnine registration program for Richardson's Ground Squirrels will be phased out. **March 2022 is the last month in which the County will be able to sell strychnine.**



Agricultural Service Board (ASB) Contacts:

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The Public Works Shop remains closed to public access. Please make an appointment with the ASB staff.



Clubroot

Clubroot was declared a 'pest' by the province of Alberta. It was added to the *Agricultural Pest Act* and it must be controlled. Clubroot can easily spread from field to field. Canola that is currently resistant to clubroot can lose that resistance through overuse or if canola is grown too often.

Since 2016, ASB Staff have checked every canola field in the County for clubroot. Inspections usually start in July and continue through to September. The County inspectors will always carry identification and will be driving a County of St. Paul Truck. Sanitation procedures are carried out to ensure clubroot is not transferred from one field to another.

When a suspect plant is found it is sent to a lab to confirm the presence of clubroot. If the test comes back positive, the producer is contacted and advised that clubroot has been found. The producer should take steps to slow or stop the spread of soil from the land.

The ASB staff will then complete an 'Incidence Test' to determine the amount of clubroot in the soil. If a large amount of clubroot is found the landowner is given a pest notice that stipulates, among other things, that canola cannot be grown on the field for three years.

If the test shows a low or moderate amount of clubroot the pest notice will require that canola not be grown for two years. This will all be communicated with the landowner and/or producer.

The County ASB posts all of the positive fields on the 'Agriculture' page of the County's website. Once the field is clean of canola for two to three years, the pest notice is lifted although the next crop of canola must be a resistant variety.

The County ASB reviews its Clubroot Policy yearly to ensure that it stays relevant with any new discoveries or advances in genetics.

The ASB has held an annual clubroot workshop for the past five years but, due to COVID-19 restrictions, other platforms may need to be used.

Weed Control near Lake Properties Part of the County's responsibility is to control noxious, nuisance weeds and brush as priorities along sightlines, roadways and municipally controlled lands, including areas around lake properties.

Invasive plants have the potential to degrade habitats, increase erosion, enhance wildfires and reduce property values. Under the *Alberta Weed Control Act*, prohibited noxious weeds, when found, need to be destroyed as early as possible.

Himalayan Balsam is a beautiful annual plant that has been found near Vincent Lake and Lottie Lake. It can grow more than six feet tall and can completely take over an area if there is enough moisture.



It is usually found in areas close to bodies of water or around lakes. It is also considered a prohibited noxious weed in Alberta and, if found, must be destroyed.

Himalayan Balsam has no natural enemies in Alberta. It easily outcompetes natural plants in a devastating way. With its shallow root growth it can make erosion a real problem with heavy rains or run off. The plant flowers all season and naturally allures pollinators away from natural plants, giving the plant another distinct advantage.

The flowers are purple to pink. **When the seed pods are ripe, seeds can shoot 10 feet** or further when touched or blown by the wind.

The plant can be easily confused with Fire Weed as its flower color is very similar. If you see these plants please call ASB. The plant can be checked to confirm if it is Himalayan Balsam. **Residents and landowners around Vincent Lake and Lottie Lake should be extra vigilant in the control of this weed.**

If Himalayan Balsam or another weed under the *Alberta Weed Control Act* is in your area, please contact the ASB.

Numerous apps are available to help identify plants. The Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen prepared an app that lists of all of the noxious weeds in Alberta. The app is available for free in the Google Play Store for Android smartphones and on iTunes for iPhones by searching 'Alberta agriculture fieldmen'.

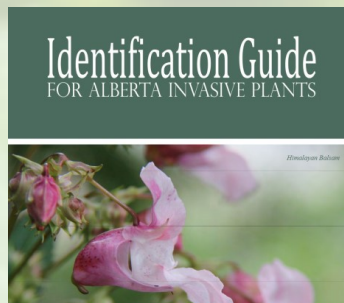
What's Growing in Your Yard?

Certain weeds are also considered '**Noxious Weeds**' in Alberta through the *Weed Control Act*. When a landowner finds these weeds on their land they must take steps to control them.

Noxious weeds are different than 'Prohibited Noxious Weeds' which need to be eradicated and the whole plant destroyed. The County of St. Paul employs weed inspectors who will enter private land and map out where these weeds are found in order to help the landowner deal with the plant.

There are over 70 plants that are designated either 'Prohibited Noxious or Noxious' in Alberta.

[Identification Guide for Alberta Invasion Plants](#) is available on the County's 'Agriculture' webpage



Examples of noxious weeds found throughout the County:



Canada Thistle Canada Thistle seed will remain viable for about three to six years when buried at typical tillage depth but some seed may survive for up to 21 years. This is a persistent perennial weed that causes significant crop yield losses.



Creeping Bellflower This can be an aggressive invader in natural plant communities. It can survive droughts and survive in a wide range of light conditions. This plant's thick creeping roots can travel under fences, lawns and concrete, making it very difficult to control. This plant is resistant to many chemicals.

Common Tansy

This noxious weed is commonly found across much of Alberta in river valleys, roadside ditches and field boundaries. It may be mildly toxic to humans and livestock. It spreads via roots and seeds that can remain viable for up to 25 years.



Common Burdock The plant prefers areas with moist fertile soils – riparian areas – and recent soil disturbance. Its prickly purple burrs are designed for dispersal, readily attaching to whatever animal may brush past.



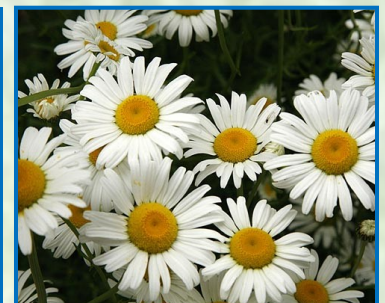
Several instances have been documented where birds and bats have become entangled in the burrs and have died.

Burdock was the inspiration for the invention of Velcro by George de Mestral in the early 1940's.

Oxeye Daisy and Scentless Chamomile What's the difference?



Scentless Chamomile



Oxeye Daisy

Scentless Chamomile is a problem in Alberta. It spreads quickly along roadsides and fence lines and reduces yields in hay fields, pastures and cropland. It produces stems that are erect, smooth and often much-branched. Several flowers are produced on one stem.

Oxeye Daisy can be distinguished from scentless chamomile by its spoon-shaped, lobed leaves. A solitary flower grows on each stem. Oxeye daisy produces up to 26,000 seeds per plant, which can remain viable in the soil for a minimum of two to three years. The plant will seed itself and germinate readily in disturbed, open soil.

FOR RENT

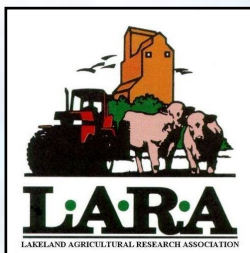
The ASB offers a variety of rental equipment to assist with farm operations remaining profitable and sustainable. The program is open to County resident only. The equipment for rent is available from Monday to Friday from the County Public Works Shop. To book an appointment call 780-645-3006.

Rental waivers will be signed and equipment will be inspected by a County representative and the renter before the equipment leaves the Public Works Shop and when equipment is returned.

Equipment that is available for rent includes cattle weigh scales, loading chute with portable corrals, squeeze chute, post pounder, tree planter, skunk trap, magpie trap, and scare cannon. See the County website under 'Agriculture' for information on applicable fees.

Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA)

The County provides annual financial support to LARA to ensure its goal continues of "conducting applied research, demonstrations and extension programs that provide valuable unbiased information to local producers." For program information see www.laraonline.ca and LARA's Facebook.



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Alberta Agriculture

For Agriculture resources: alberta.ca/agriculture

Agri-news provides the latest information on agriculture in Alberta. The weekly email contains news, information for producers, the latest on food and beverage production, marketing, research, events and programs. Subscribe to **Agri-news** at alberta.ca/sign-up-for-agri-news

Beaver Control The County manages beavers in four ways: Blasting Dams, Cleaning, Trapping, and Installing a Water Leveling Device.



Beavers are very important to our environment but sometimes they just get into the wrong area and cause problems with our roads and infrastructure. Every spring the County responds to numerous complaints about flooding related to beavers. These industrious animals plug up culverts and waterways which can cause flooding of land and property. The County employs two trappers to ensure the culverts and roads are open for water to flow. If you see a culvert issue, please call County Public Works at 780-645-3006.

Dam Removal The ASB can help in some circumstances with dam removal using dynamite. For a \$250 fee the County may blow a dam that is causing issues for a landowner. There are several points to consider before a dam is blown such as where the water will be diverted, whether the water will harm property or infrastructure downstream, whether the County is under a fire ban, and the location of underground utilities.

The Beaver Reduction Program runs until June 25, and from September 1 to October 29, 2021. To participate, individuals must *first* register land quarters. Beavers must be from registered quarters. The whole beaver tail must be brought in. Payment is \$15/beaver tail. Call the ASB staff to make an appointment to register.

Ag Facts

- * At 31%, Alberta has the third largest area of farmland in Canada. Every year more than 21 million acres of cropland are harvested across the province.
- * Alberta is the largest beef producing province in Canada. In July 2019, the province had an estimated 4.9 million head of cattle and calves on farms.
- * Alberta has over 300,000 honey bee colonies, the most in all of Canada. These colonies produce more honey than any other province.

