

Why Weeds Matter

The average city- or town-dwelling citizen may not even give weeds a second thought. However, for Canada's farmers and people involved in agribusiness, invasive weeds are a serious threat that need to be controlled, and in some cases, eliminated.

If left unchecked, excessive growth of invasive weeds can cause immeasurable damage to crops, the environment, the livestock industry and to our economy. Alberta's Weed Control Act exists to enforce the control of weeds in order to protect landowners and our environment.

The Act charges landowners with the responsibility to control weeds on their property, to prevent the spread to adjacent properties. Under the Weed Control Act, municipalities are legally required to enforce the provisions of the Act - enforcement is not optional. For the purposes of the Act, weeds are divided into three categories.

Restricted Weeds

Weeds in this category pose a **SERIOUS THREAT**, and as such must be eradicated. Generally these weeds possess characteristics of rapid spread and aggressive competition, and are difficult to control. These weeds are generally found in small numbers in Alberta, and are designated "Restricted" to prevent their establishment. Restricted weeds must be completely eradicated. Individual municipalities have the power to elevate certain weed species

to "Restricted" status. No known Restricted Weeds are present in our area except where Mountain View County has elevated Scentsless Chamomile from Noxious to Restricted status.

Noxious Weeds

These weeds have the ability to spread rapidly, and cause severe crop losses and economic hardship. These weeds must be controlled to prevent further spread. Noxious weeds common in our area are Russian Knapweed, Field Bindweed, White Cockle, Cleavers, Leafy Spurge, Canada Thistle, Toadflax, Scentsless Chamomile, Common Tansy, Oxeye Daisy, Tall Buttercup, and Purple Loosestrife.

Nuisance Weeds

These weeds are common to the province, and in many cases are native species. They may be found on almost all land throughout Alberta, and as such are very difficult to eradicate. They can cause significant economic losses, but are so biologically suited that they cannot effectively be eradicated. Nuisance weeds common to our area are Dandelion, Common Chickweed, Field Chickweed, Cow Cockle, Green Foxtail, Stinkweed, and Russian Thistle.

For a complete list of these classes of weeds, visit www.qp.gov.ab.ca and under Catalogue Search, type in "Weed Control Act." Information is also available at www.agric.gov.ab.ca. Under Search, type in "Weeds." Olds Municipal Library (5217 52 St) also has lots of helpful information.

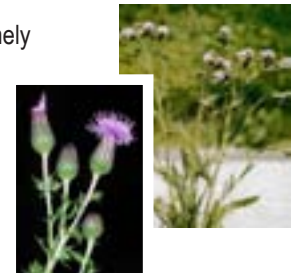
WANTED for being Noxious...

SCENTLESS CHAMOMILE



Scentsless Chamomile was introduced into Canada about 60 years ago from Europe, where it is also a major weed. It is an extremely invasive weed which is very harmful to crops, agricultural lands and natural areas. It can grow as an annual, biennial or a perennial. Scentsless Chamomile flowers from May to October. Each mature plant can produce up to one million seeds. This weed looks like a small daisy, but has many stems growing from one plant, while daisies have only one stem with one flower. The leaves are deeply divided and fern-like, and the whole plant is bushy and can grow up to 1 metre tall. Scentsless Chamomile establishes itself on bare waste areas, thin patches of exposed soil, and in piles of soil or fill. Control is most effective at the early stages. The young weeds can be dug up, bagged and tagged. Do not compost Scentsless Chamomile as it may go to seed in a compost pile or landfill.

CANADA THISTLE



Canada Thistle is an extremely competitive perennial that spreads mainly by horizontal roots and by seed. It has feathery hairs attached to its seed to aid in short distance dispersal. Canada Thistle has small white to purple flowers clustered into a head. New roots, which develop from old roots, continually replace weak or dead roots. Roots can regenerate from small pieces and growth is rapid. Root starvation is the key to controlling Canada Thistle. Tillage and mowing are also both effective in controlling this noxious weed. If infested areas are mowed every three to four weeks from June to September, the weeds will become weakened. Canada Thistle dies out eventually in areas that are mowed regularly. Hand-pulling and bagging weeds is also effective for control of small areas. Bags of weeds should be tagged. Do not compost Canada Thistle as it may go to seed in a compost pile or landfill.



The two Noxious Weeds most commonly found in Olds are Scentsless Chamomile and Canada Thistle. The entire town is closely monitored by the Municipal Enforcement Officer for the presence of these weeds. When a property with these weeds is identified, the owner/occupant will be issued a notice to eradicate these weeds within a specific time period. If this deadline is not met, the Town may arrange for eradication measures to be taken at the expense of the owner/occupant. In addition, a Violation tag may be issued. It is imperative that everyone be extremely vigilant for these weeds and take timely action if they are found. If everyone does his/her part, the spread of these weeds will be greatly reduced.

Weed Enforcement

Under the Weed Control Act, municipalities are legally required to enforce the provisions of the Act - enforcement is not optional.

Within the legislation are enforcement standards for various weed categories:

RESTRICTED weeds must be controlled wherever they are found - there is zero tolerance for these species.

NOXIOUS weeds are to be issued notices on a discretionary basis on the decision of the Weed Inspector following established unit guidelines.

At present, unit guidelines dictate that notices will be issued for stands of Canada Thistle, Toadflax, Scentless Chamomile, Leafy Spurge and Foxtail Barley. All other plants are treated on a discretionary basis taking into consideration the severity of the weed infestation and the location the weeds are growing. The location includes such considerations as the area of town, proximity to water, and proximity to areas for increased spread.

For assistance with or information about how to eradicate Restricted or Noxious Weeds on your property, contact any of the Town of Olds Weed Inspectors listed in this brochure, or any Agricultural Fieldman.

Recommended Methods of Control Be Informed.

Learn to recognize noxious weeds. Point them out to your family, friends and neighbours, and inform them that these weeds are a problem in Olds, and why it is important to control their spread.

Start with YOUR Yard.

The only methods that ensure destruction of Noxious Weeds are hand-pulling and burning, or with careful application of herbicide. In extreme cases, you may have to use a combination of both methods. When hand-pulling, be sure to wear gloves - pull the weed

from the root, being careful not to scatter any seeds. Place the weed and as much of the root as possible in a plastic bag and seal the bag. Noxious Weeds should not be composted or put in the garbage. Weeds sealed in plastic bags may be delivered to the Public Works Shop, Monday to Friday between 8.30 am and 3.00 pm, where they will be disposed of properly. Please call 403.507.4834 before dropping off weeds.

Use Herbicides if Necessary.

There are effective herbicides available for broadleaf weeds such as Scentless Chamomile and Canada Thistle, however, check the label, as a Licensed Herbicide Applicator may be required to apply them.

For eradication services, refer to companies listed in the local phone book or in the "Landscaping & Yard Maintenance" category in the Town of Olds on-line Business Directory at www.olds.ca. Please refer to other sources for additional companies.

For information on Licensed Herbicide & Pesticide Applicators, please refer to the businesses listed in the Yellow Pages under "Weed Control," or ask for references wherever herbicides or pesticides are sold.

If you choose to apply herbicides yourself, wear appropriate safety equipment, do not use herbicides near water sources, and be aware that even light winds will cause chemicals to drift. A detailed catalogue on herbicides and pesticides entitled "Crop Protection 2009" is available from Alberta Agriculture. Call toll free 800.292.5697.

Create Weedless Environments.

Noxious Weeds love bare soil. Maintain a healthy cover of shrubs, grass or mulch to keep your yard and garden free of weeds.

Unsightly Premises

The citizens of Olds pride themselves on the quality of yard and property maintenance in town, demonstrated over the past five years by the Town of Olds receiving

several awards through the Communities in Bloom competition. The Unsightly Premises & Snow Removal Bylaw requires that occupants/owners cut grass or weeds on their property, including town property adjacent to their premises, i.e. sidewalks, boulevards and back alleys. In addition, Restricted and Noxious Weeds must be controlled in a manner as prescribed by a local Weed Inspector (see information above). In addition, yards are not allowed to become cluttered with old implements, automobiles, scrap iron or other rubbish that cause the property to be unsightly, a hazard or a nuisance. Complaints about unsightly premises will be investigated and, if deemed appropriate, owners/occupants of properties in violation of the Bylaw will be given a "Notice to Remedy Condition" and if they have not done so by the deadline, the property may be cleaned up by the Town of Olds at the owner's/occupant's expense and a Violation tag may also be issued.

Trees & Shrubs

Owners of property in town that have trees, shrubs or hedges on them must maintain them so that they do not impinge on sidewalks, alleys and streets within the town of Olds. Failure to provide maintenance in compliance with the Bylaw may result in enforcement action.

Contact Us

Tel 403.556.6981
Email jfulton@olds.ca
Web www.olds.ca

Community Peace Officer
CPO Adrian Duhault

Weed Inspectors

Jane Fulton, Weed Inspector, 403.994.0474
Kelly Giesbrecht, Foreman, Parks & Facilities

Be on the Lookout for Noxious Weeds!



A Guide for Property Owners

