

## Annual Weed Control Program Rotation Schedule

**Please provide clarification on the rotation schedule for the County's "Annual Weed Control Program" and how the public website communicates the schedule of which areas are done and when.**

## Planning and Development Services (PDS) Invasive Plant Control Program Area Details

Herbicide Application: The application of herbicide along County rural road right-of-ways (grid roads and country residential) and municipal/environmental reserves, to control noxious and prohibited noxious weeds, as required by the provincial *Weed Control Act* and *Regulation*; and trees and brush under 2.0 meters in height. Herbicide application occurs annually between from May to September, specific application timing is dependent on the vegetation being treated. Internal Work Orders are generated by Weed Inspectors when noxious weeds are found on County-owned land in rural service areas; control work will be completed by the date specified on the work order. Rural residents who do not wish to have herbicide applied to the roadside adjacent to their property, can sign up for Strathcona County's Landowner Option Program (LOP). By enrolling in this program, the resident assumes responsibility of any noxious or prohibited noxious weeds, as well as any brush control requirements.

Mechanical/Manual Control: Is the cutting or hand removal of invasive plants that cannot be treated with herbicide. Mechanical/manual control may occur between May 1 and October 31 annually. Mechanical/manual control is an essential part of a successful integrated pest management plan as it allows for control in areas that are unable to be controlled through herbicide application. Mechanical control methods such as weed whipping or mowing, must be targeted at the ground surface level portion of the weeds to remove the actively growing portions to stunt the growth of weed infestations. Manual control is the removal of weed species by hand with the goal of complete removal of the undesired vegetation including all the roots. Both methods are highly dependent on the frequency of control and the timing, it is crucial to control the plant before it has gone to seed. Mechanical/manual control activities should occur when herbicide application is unfitted for the situation such as wet conditions or areas that are deemed sensitive.

## Process

- Landowner Option Program (LOP) notice letters will be mailed to registered participants by March 31.
- Prior to commencing annual herbicide application activities, all waterbodies, shelterbelts, and LOP residences will be marked.
- Roadsides north of Highway 16 will be treated with herbicide using broadcast application on odd numbered years.
- Roadsides south of Highway 16 will be treated annually using an integrated pest management plan (IPM)
  - A combination of broadcast herbicide application, single-stem herbicide application, wet-blading, mechanical and/or manual control is utilized.
  - The appropriate timing and method of control for each location will be determined annually by the Invasive Plant Specialist, Control.

- Roadsides in country residential subdivisions will be treated with herbicide annually, using single-stem application.
  - Additional mechanical/manual control may be conducted on an as-needed basis; or where proximity to environmentally sensitive areas limit the use of herbicide.
- Highway service roads and the industrial area west of Sherwood Park will be treated with herbicide using broadcast application on even numbered years.
- Other requests will be managed according to the following Herbicide Application and Mechanical/Manual Control methodology:
  - County Connect cases will be reviewed by the Invasive Plant Specialist, Control, and the resident will be contacted within 48 hours.
  - The Invasive Plant Specialist will evaluate and prioritize internal Work Orders and assign the work to be completed.
    - Priority will be given to prohibited noxious weed control.
  - The Invasive Plant Specialist will inspect rural grid road rights-of-way annually. The specialist will triage based on severity, determine the appropriate control method and schedule locations into the following season work plan, or prioritize for immediate completion.
    - If herbicide application is required, the Invasive Plant Specialist will select the appropriate equipment for application. The Invasive Plant Specialist will consult with the Senior Invasive Plant Specialist, to determine the herbicide and rate of application for use.
    - Schedule of herbicide application along rural road right-of-ways is scheduled is determined on an annual basis as required to avoid conflict with the mowing completed by Transportation and Engineering Operations (TEO) workgroups.
- Other requests from internal customers will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and a completion schedule will be determined as appropriate.

### Communication


Multiple platforms are utilized to communicate the PDS Invasive Plant Control Program with stakeholders. In addition to a ¼ page ad placed annually in the Sherwood Park News; social media posts (Twitter and Facebook) provide a high level overview of our program and direct viewers to visit our [Rural Roadside Vegetation Control Program website](#) to learn more about the program and the control methods. The [Rural Roadside Vegetation Control Program website](#) includes information about weed control conducted by both the PDS and TEO branches. It includes the purpose behind the work that is conducted and details on the schedules; including the following:

- Why the County uses herbicides:
  - Spraying herbicide is one tool that the County uses, along with mowing and brushing, to manage the weeds and brush in the ditch. All products used are approved and regulated by Health Canada and applied by certified applicators. For more information on the products used, please contact 780-417-7100.
- Which vegetation is treated with herbicide:
  - We spray herbicide to treat weeds designated as noxious and prohibited noxious under the *Alberta Weed Act*. Trees and brush under two metres tall are also sprayed to prevent them from getting too close to the road.
  - Depending on the location, some areas are broadcast sprayed, meaning equipment will spray herbicide to cover the entire ditch. Other areas are spot-sprayed, meaning County staff walk in the ditch and spray only certain plants by hand. All

properties registered as "no spray" within the Landowner Option Program are excluded from spraying.

- How often the County Sprays Herbicide:
  - The County sprays all roadsides south of Highway 16 (grid road and CR's) annually using a combination of spot-spraying and broadcast spraying.
  - The County broadcast sprays all the roadsides north of Highway 16 every other year on odd numbered years.
  - County land that is not part of annual spraying programs may be either spot sprayed or broadcast sprayed, as required.
- Frequency of mowing depends on the location of the ditches:
  - Range roads and township roads are mowed twice per year. The first cut occurs during May or June and the second cut occurs during July or August.
  - Rural subdivisions are mowed once per year, typically in August.
  - Rural hamlets are mowed three times per year, in June, July and August.

Along with the permanent information which can be found on the page, a Notice Box is used at the top of the page to ensure program updates pertinent to the current season are easily visible for members of the public who may be interested in the field work underway at any given time. The image below depicts the current Notice Box posted on the webpage.



### Program update - May 2023

All County maintained ditches north of Highway 16 will be broadcast sprayed with herbicide where required this year.

All ditches south of Highway 16 and country residential subdivisions will be sprayed for weeds and brush using a combination of spot-spraying and broadcast spraying.

To request "no spray" next to your property, please contact us at: 780-417-7100 to learn about our ...

[Show more +](#)

Last modified: May 19, 2023, 4:11 p.m.

The [Weed control in parks and open spaces](#) web page provides general information on our annual weed control program, including what chemicals are used for and what month those chemicals will be applied. Exact sites and timelines can fluctuate based on weather, availability of equipment, staffing levels and contractor availability.

- Dandelion Control <https://www.strathcona.ca/agriculture-environment/plants/weeds/dandelions/>
  - We rely heavily on mowing to control the dandelions, but do also spray them on a five year cycle
  - Dandelion spraying occurs between May and October
  - Open spaces deemed appropriate for spraying are broken into five different groupings

- One group is sprayed per year in the months outlined above
- Noxious Weed Control
  - Over 140 natural areas are on our list to maintain
  - We attempt to manage all these sites at least once a year
  - No spray zones are maintained more frequently in an effort to prevent noxious weeds from setting seed and to exhaust their roots systems
  - We currently have a list of 18 residents who have requested to be on the “No Spray” list
  - 15-20 priority sites are maintained twice per year
    - July – they are maintained mechanically where we hand pull or weed whipped the area in July
    - Fall – the regrowth is sprayed
    - These sites interchange from year to year depending on degrees on infestations
  - Along with completing our own inspections, we rely on provincial Weed Inspector notices, internal notifications and County Connect cases to help identify problem areas
- Prohibited Noxious
  - We currently have eleven areas where prohibited noxious weeds have been identified and we are required to remove these weeds immediately
  - These sites are checked monthly for regrowth to ensure we comply with provincial legislation