

## **History of the County of Renfrew Approach to Vegetation Control**

Vegetation control is conducted on County of Renfrew properties including roadsides. Vegetation control is an important part of road maintenance. It ensures clear sight lines for signs and vehicular traffic along roadways and at intersections; and it aids in reducing wildlife collisions. Vegetation control promotes drainage and drying, and prevents the establishment of trees, weeds and brush in the right of way.

In 1991, the County of Renfrew established a “No Chemical” approach for the control of weeds and brush on County right of ways and directed that weed and brush control be maintained by mechanical methods (Resolution # CR-CC-91-02-29).

In February 2000, County Council reviewed this resolution and Resolution # OP-CC-00-02-28 was passed upholding the “No Chemical” approach for the control of weeds and brush on County of Renfrew road right-of-ways. It was however identified that; the practice of mowing did not kill hazardous plants and may help to further spread the seeds along the roadside.

In 2015, following extensive coverage in local and national media regarding hazardous and invasive weeds; the Area Weed Inspector, Forestry and Public Works staff received numerous inquiries and concerns from the public and media concerning Wild Parsnip and the County’s role in removing this hazardous/noxious/invasive weed from private, County and Municipal Lands.

In 2017, the County invited the public, local municipalities, and organizations to review and provide comments to the draft Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP). The IPMP included the use of herbicides, mowing, mapping, monitoring, and educating the public in controlling hazardous plants found on County owned properties (roads, trails, forestry etc). In 2017, County Council approved the IPMP and directed staff to proceed with the approach in the IPMP to deal with the hazardous plants like Wild Parsnip.

1991

- County of Renfrew established a “No Chemical” approach for the control of weeds and brush on County right of ways
- County Council directed that weed and brush control be maintained by mechanical methods

2000

- County Council reviewed and upheld the “No Chemical” approach for the control of weeds and brush on County of Renfrew road right-of-ways.
- It was however identified that; the practice of mowing did not kill hazardous plants and may help to further spread the seeds along the roadside.

2015

- Following extensive media coverage regarding hazardous and invasive weeds; the Area Weed Inspector, Forestry and Public Works staff received numerous inquiries and concerns from the public and media concerning Wild Parsnip and the County’s role in removing this weed.

2017

- The County invited the public, local municipalities, and organizations to review and provide comments to the draft Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP).
- County Council approved the IPMP and directed staff to proceed with the approach in the IPMP to deal with the hazardous plants like Wild Parsnip.

The hazardous and invasive plants like Wild Parsnip and Giant Hogweed cause severe burns when the sap of the plant contacts the skin. Wild Parsnip has been in the County for a number of years and is well established throughout the County. Public concern about hazardous plants is still high due to the plant's health risks to humans and animals.

### Why Be Concerned?



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**Toxic Giant Hogweed plant causes mother horrific third degree burns - Express**

**Warning: Toxic plant giant hogweed delaying floods clean-up and could have spread to homes - Bury Times**

**Girl's skin 'melts' after giant hogweed plant**

Ellie the Great Dane is left with horrific burns after sniffing a toxic giant hogweed plant

**'I Was In Agony': Call For Giant Hogweed Action**

**A monster of pain, hogweed stalks capital with toxic ooze**



## FAQ's

### **Why is weed control necessary?**

**A:** Vegetation/weed control is an important part of road maintenance. It ensures clear sight lines for signs and vehicular traffic along roadways and at intersections; and it aids in reducing wildlife collisions. Vegetation control promotes drainage and drying, and prevents the establishment of trees, weeds and brush in the right of way. In addition, the weed control program reduces contact with hazardous weeds with members of the public, municipal staff, emergency services personnel and utility workers that all may need to enter these areas on a regular basis.

### **Where does the County conduct weed control?**

**A:** The County of Renfrew conducts weed control on County owned properties that have been identified to contain the targeted hazardous weed species. The County does not conduct weed control around mailboxes, along open water, or maintained right of ways. In fact, weed control helps reduce the chance that hazardous weeds will spread to privately owned property.

### **How is the public informed on hazardous weed control?**

**A:** The public is notified annually of weed control through public notices in several local newspapers, posts on the County of Renfrew website. Information and maps regarding the weed control program are available year-round on the [county's website](#).

### **What is an Integrated Pest Management Plan?**

**A:** Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP) is a sustainable, science-based, decision-making process that combines biological, cultural, physical and chemical tools to identify, manage and reduce risk from pests and pest management tools and strategies in a way that minimizes overall economic, health and environmental

risks. Herbicide use is just one tool in the toolbox to control hazardous plants on County owned lands. In 2017, after a public engagement and feedback process, County Council approved a County of Renfrew IPMP and directed staff to proceed with the approach in the IPMP to deal with the hazardous plants like Wild Parsnip. Please visit [County of Renfrew's IPMP](#) to view the plan.

### **Does roadside mowing control hazardous weeds?**

**A:** Although some weeds are impacted by mowing, mowing alone does not kill hazardous weeds and may further spread seeds from these hazardous plants along the roadside. Control by manual methods is not only impractical for the scale of its current established area, it presents serious risk to workers who would be required to handle the plant. Treatment only occurs in areas identified by County staff where Wild Parsnip is present.

### **Will the County be using a broad-spectrum/nonselective herbicide?**

**A:** No, the County only uses a selective herbicide (2021 ClearView Herbicide) which is formulated to control specific hazardous weeds or weed categories. The herbicide is toxic to some plant species but less toxic to others. The County does not use broad-spectrum non-selective glyphosate products in weed control. Please visit the [Public Health Ontario website](#) for more info.

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/c/2020/case-study-herbicide-wild-parsnip-giant-hogweed.pdf?la=en>

### **How does the County ensure safe use of the herbicide being used?**

**A:** The use of the herbicide by the contractor must meet all federal and provincial requirements, including requirements of the Pesticides Act, Ontario Regulation 63/09 and those described on the product label. Ontario relies on the Federal Government to assess the human health and environmental risks of these products. Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) registers these products after ensuring that their use poses minimal risk to human health

and the environment if used in accordance with approved product labels. Questions regarding the safety and efficacy of these products should be directed to the PMRA. The product is applied only on County owned properties that have been identified to contain the targeted hazardous weed species. The weed control program follows the practices as outlined in the County of Renfrew's Integrated Pest Management Plan. The County does not conduct weed control around mailboxes, along open water, or maintained right of ways.

**Do other municipalities/organizations use herbicides for hazardous weed control?**

**A:** Yes, many municipalities in Eastern Ontario have a vegetation control program using herbicides. The Ministry of Transportation also uses herbicides to control vegetation around guiderails.