

Frequently Asked Questions

Weed Control in Campbell River

Periodically, beginning in late spring/early summer, the City applies herbicide as needed to curbs and sidewalks, fence lines, sports fields, gravel walkways and other landscaped areas. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions about the City's weed control program.

Why does the City have a weed control program?

An outbreak of weeds on sports fields can destroy the turf and occasionally require management to preserve the field. Along roadways, weeds accumulate in the seam between the curb and sidewalk. As they grow, die and decay, this builds up organic material, which, with the freeze\thaw cycle will eventually break out the curb. A few species of noxious weeds are also difficult to control by any other means.

What other methods have been used to try to control weeds?

Along roads, different approaches have included steaming, burning and scraping. Horticultural vinegar has also been tried, but is not as effective. Scraping was the most effective non-herbicide alternative, but also the most labour-intensive and most costly. With limited resources and the large area to cover, weed scraping does not successfully manage the problem.

How is the City managing weeds this year?

In accordance with its Integrated Pest Management Policy, primarily through application of a herbicide, and some mechanical methods.

Which herbicide does the City use, and is it harmful?

Along roadsides, commercially available Roundup is the main herbicide applied, according to the prescribed concentration and application rate. This product targets plants only, and is considered harmless to people, animals and insects once dry (approximately two hours).

On sports fields, the City uses Trillion, a selective herbicide, which is not available for domestic use.

Where will herbicide be applied? Herbicide will be applied as needed on sports fields, fence lines and gravel walkways in parks, at the airport (air field areas only) and along roadways (on arterial and collector roads and high-traffic local roads with a concrete curb and gutter, targeted at the seam between the asphalt and concrete (gutter) and at the seam between the back of curb and the adjacent sidewalk).

Weeds and grass left to grow between the sidewalk curb build up organic material, which will eventually break out the curb, requiring expensive repair.



How will the public know herbicide is being used?

The City will publish a general-information newspaper ad and set up temporary signs in areas where herbicide is being applied and remain in place until the product is dry and considered safe for people and pets.

When will it be safe to be in the area?

Along roadways, once the herbicide is dry, approximately two hours after it's applied, the herbicide is considered harmless. Sports fields are closed for 12 hours as a precautionary measure.

Is it harmful to touch herbicide on weeds?

When herbicide is wet, the risk for humans and other animals is considered low. As a safety precaution, it is recommended that people avoid contact with areas where the herbicide was applied for two hours or as otherwise indicated by signs.



FACT SHEET
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Weed Control in Campbell River

When, and how often, does the City apply herbicide?

The best way to kill weeds is to apply herbicide as the plants begin to grow. Typically, the City first applies herbicide in late spring or early summer, with follow-up spot applications in summer or fall if required. Playing fields are sprayed only as needed, when weed infestations occur.

What time of day will herbicide be applied?

Typically, herbicide will be applied early in the morning (5 a.m.) to avoid traffic conflicts and to ensure the product is dry and considered safe before most people and pets are out walking.

Does weather affect the schedule to apply herbicide?

Yes, herbicide will not be applied in rainy or windy weather, so the schedule might be delayed by weather changes.

What about storm water contamination?

Herbicide is applied according to established best management practices, which includes a buffer distance from catch basins, streams, creeks and shorelines. Also, herbicide will not be applied on rainy days, to ensure it remains on targeted vegetation only.

How can I help control weeds along our roads?

Property owners in areas where herbicide will not be applied can assist our efforts to control weeds by scraping vegetation from curbs and sidewalks to slow their growth and the related build-up of organic material in the seams. Under the City's nuisance bylaw, homeowners are not permitted to apply a pesticide or herbicide to any boulevard.

Why not just let the weeds grow? Roadside weed growth is unsightly, and the issue of the build-up of organic material in the seams can cause significant damage to the curb and sidewalk. This can lead to both a safety hazard and costly repairs. On sports fields, a weed infestation can destroy the turf, which leads to costly maintenance and replacement.

How does the City manage invasive plants? The City is also required to control noxious weeds and invasive plants (such as knotweed, giant hogweed and yellow flag iris) under the BC Weed Control Act. We work in partnership with Greenways Land Trust, using both herbicides and mechanical means (for yellow flag iris) to limit and control the spread of these plant species.

How does the City control its use of herbicide?

An integrated pest management policy (available at www.campbellriver.ca under Your City Hall / Green City/ Environmental Protection / Pesticide Awareness) applies to all City properties, and ensures the City follows best practices when applying herbicide to control weeds. The policy states that other weed control methods must be considered prior to the use of herbicide, and that herbicide is only used when other methods have not worked to solve the problem. Also, the policy states that only a person certified to correctly apply the herbicide can do the work. The policy is followed by all City departments and contractors who manage weeds.



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