

# The Municipal Agricultural Connection



Aimee and Jason Tondou, grand prize winner at the Rural Routes Farmer Appreciation Municipal Supper

Have an interesting municipal topic you want discussed in the Newsletter? Assistant Agricultural Fieldman Aimee Wonsik, [asb@mdwainwright.ca](mailto:asb@mdwainwright.ca)



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## M.D. of WAINWRIGHT INVOLVED IN MEDICINE HAT RAT ROUND UP



Jason Storch, Cypress County and Norway rat.

On August 20, 2012 news media released information that there was a potential rat infestation in the Medicine Hat landfill site. News media spread like wildfire, since Alberta's known and respected "rat-free" status was on the line. Since the 1950's, the Province of Alberta has maintained a rat-free status, by the initial hard work and abolishing of rats by a handful of rat patrol inspectors. Over the years, rat inspector dedications along with a successful media campaign promoting the destruction of Norway rats has kept the Province eradicated of the declared pest on the Alberta Pest Act.



Nikeae Michalchuk, City of Calgary, holding fancy pet Norway rat.

trucks, trailers and c-cans concealing rats has escalated rat foundation.

### HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WEED?



**Big Head Knapweed** has been found within town of Wainwright... in a perennial flowerbed! It listed on the AB Weed Control Act as Prohibited Noxious which means plant must be eradicated. Each head produces 200 seeds, and is invasive. If you see this weed in roadsides, contact the M.D.

Over the last few years however, rat harbouring has been increasing. The influx of new Albertans unaware of our prized Provincial victory, a generation of younger Albertans oblivious to the devastation rats can cause, the increasing number of "fancy rats" as pets or used as pet food, and the amount of materials and goods that are transported across provincial borders through



Alberta Rat Patrol team, on farm clean-up.

The M.D. of Wainwright is one of 5 patrol municipalities; that actively search for new rat colonies between the Alberta and Saskatchewan border. The M.D. of Bonnyville, County of Vermilion River, M.D. of Provost, Cypress County are members of the rat control zone. (Special areas 3+4 are inspected by the Province.) Each of these municipalities employs a highly trained pest officer that has past experience with rat clean-ups. The City of Medicine Hat, landfill



Rod Gabrielson, 2nd from left.

managers and Cypress County officials promptly requested assistance from municipal rat patrol team, including Rod Gabrielson from the M.D. of Wainwright for this latest clean up. When handling a rat situation, the speed is of utmost importance; rats are extremely intelligent and will quickly relocate. Rats have the ability to reproduce at an astonishing rate, a pair of rats can create exponentially 16,000 offspring in one year. If you have a potential rat situation, contact Rod at 780-842-7285.

# BLISTER BEETLES TOXIC TO HORSES

A few weeks ago, there was some news articles in the local newspapers that surfaced about Blister Beetles being toxic to horses.

Blister Beetles are toxic to horses when ingested (depending on the type of blister beetle and the quantity eaten between 25-300), however at this time there are no confirmed reports of any horse poisoning within our municipality; or within

our Province, as quoted by Alberta Agriculture Entomologist Doug McCauley, August 23. Horse owners should always be aware of what may be contained in the feed they either bale or purchase. Blister Beetles are foliage feeders and can be found in alfalfa fields. Larvae of Blister Beetles are a natural enemy to grasshopper eggs. Control of Blister Beetles is not normally recommended.



## Battle River Watershed Festival, Riverdale Mini-Park

On Saturday, August 18, the M.D. of Wainwright along with the Battle River Watershed Alliance hosted a Watershed Festival at the Riverdale Mini-park! The festival had fun activities like face painting and craft making of bird houses, rain sticks and a wild flower press. The site beside the Battleriver had kids and parents



spread out enjoying the day with an estimate of 150 people in attendance. The Saskatoon Pie Contest brought 5 entries.

Clara Adamson won both the judge's choice and the people's choice award for her delicious Saskatoon pie! This was the first year that both



the judges and people agreed on the same winner; Clara gracefully gave her 2nd prize to runner up Midge Lambert. The BBQ grills were cooking some great tasting hamburgers and hotdogs; and everyone enjoyed the event! *Special thanks to G. Poruchnek for his time spent organizing the event.*



**HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WEED?**  
**Tall Buttercup**  
First municipal sightings last month, near Taylor Coulee, north of Chauvin and close to inter-sections 14 +17. Toxic to livestock (including cows and horses).



## RURAL ROUTES SUPPER DONATION TO THE FOODBANK

On Friday, August 17, the M.D. of Wainwright hosted the annual Rural Routes supper. There were approximately 362 people registered for the popular event.

A wonderful highlight of the night is the silver plate collection for the Wainwright and District Food Bank. This year, the collections brought in \$898.52!

On August 24, Pastor Dan, who is in charge of the Food Bank, came to the M.D. office to be presented with the donation. He said the donation monies would be able to purchase the extra fresh food supplies for the food bank for the next 6-8 weeks. The collected monies would be used toward purchasing of fresh milk, bread, eggs and ground beef.



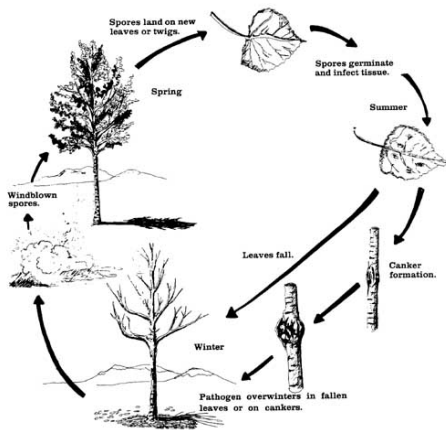
Pastor Dan, Aimee and James

Pastor Dan also mentioned that the Food Bank can always use donations of canned meats, which are always handy to have on hand, and have the ability to store longer.

He also mentioned that boxes of cereals is another item that the food bank likes to keep well stocked on their shelves. Cereal of any kind is a staple of all the boxes that are put together at the food bank for needing families.

If you have an over abundance of fresh harvest garden vegetables, the Food Bank can use those too! Also, wild game that has been inspected at an approved meat facility can also be accepted. With back to school happening, tetra juice packs and other lunch supplies are also in need. Pastor Dan can be contacted at 780-842-3033.

# RUSTS, FUNGUS, BROWN POPLARS, here in the M.D.



Marssonina leaf spot on aspen, late symptoms.

Once the rust is established on aspen hosts, it can multiply rapidly under favourable wet conditions throughout the summer. Several years of heavy infections can cause some growth losses, especially on younger trees. Fallen infected leaves shelter the fungus until the next year's disease cycle.



Leaf rust, bottom leaves late symptoms.

## ASPEN & POPLAR LEAF SPOTS

Foliage diseases can reduce the aesthetic value of aspen and cottonwood. Occasionally, a severe disease outbreak causes premature defoliation or dieback of parts of the tree. If a tree loses its leaves early in the season, it may grow new ones and its health is not seriously affected. If it loses them in midsummer, however, growing new leaves may prevent the tree from fully hardening off before cold weather or reduce the amount of stored food. This leads to increased danger of frost damage, reduced growth, and predisposition to other diseases or insects. If it loses its leaves late in the season, it will not grow new ones or lose much vigour.

### Marssonina Leaf Spot

The fungus *Marssonina* causes the most common foliage disease on aspen.

*Marssonina* leaf spots are dark brown flecks, often with yellow halos. Immature spots characteristically have a white center. On severely infected leaves, in wet weather, several spots may fuse to form large black dead patches. Spots also may develop on leaf petioles and succulent new shoots. *Marssonina* survives the winter on fallen leaves that were infected the previous year. With wet, spring weather the fungus produces microscopic "seeds" or spores that are carried by the wind and infect emerging leaves. Early infections are rarely serious, but if the weather remains favour-

able, spores from these infections can cause a widespread secondary infection. Heavy secondary infections become visible later in the growing season and cause premature leaf loss on infected trees.

### Septoria Leaf Spot

The fungus *Septoria* causes another common foliar disease in aspen. The appearance of *Septoria* leaf spots varies

considerably between tree species and with time. Symptoms include a distinct tan circular spot with black margins and small black pimples in the center, and irregular brown to black spots that coalesce into large areas.



Septoria showing irregular brown to black

### Leaf Rust

A rust disease caused by the fungus *Melampsora* is often seen on aspen.

Though common, this disease rarely causes serious problems. Rust is easily recognized by small, yellow-orange pustules that are scattered on the lower leaf surfaces. These orange pustules are most visible in late summer and early fall. The life cycle of this fungus requires two different tree hosts. During wet spring weather, spores are released from the fungus, which has overwintered on fallen aspen leaves. These spores infect evergreen needles, such as pine, fir or spruce, where they cause little damage. After 2 to 3 weeks, spores produced on these evergreen hosts are blown to aspen leaves.

Tree resistance is the best way to prevent foliar diseases. Several poplar hybrids or species are resistant to one or more of these diseases. Ask your local nursery for a resistant variety. Some aspens are resistant to leaf spots, but aspen production methods make it difficult to select trees for resistance. Sanitation is an effective control for some foliar diseases. Fall removal of infected leaves, twigs and branches can reduce the amount of disease the next spring.

Raking and destroying infected leaves can reduce *Marssonina* leaf spot, ink spot and leaf rust. Keep leaves as dry as possible to reduce the incidence of leaf spots, water in early morning so leaves can dry out. Keep sprinkler patterns adjusted so leaves don't stay wet. Space trees apart to reduce humidity to help prevent leaf diseases.

Fungicides, if applied early enough, can prevent foliage diseases. Spraying will prevent only new infections; it will not cure leaves already infected. If an infection is developing on particularly valuable trees, or if there is good reason to believe an infection is imminent, the trees can be sprayed with fungicides. Trees that perennially have foliar diseases should be sprayed at bud break and then two or three times during the growing season at 12- to 14-day intervals. Please follow label rates and directions when applying fungicides.

# SUMMER 2012, WHERE DID IT GO?



Spotted Knapweed



Notorious Mayweed growing under sign!



Monique Veitch, Natural Resource Tech at CFB/ ASU National Defence Wainwright: guiding Spotted Knapweed Tour.



Wainwright and District Bench show, municipally found Prohibited Noxious and Noxious weeds shown on public display.

Excellent example of roadside brush control for local producer, by Laine Maron, municipal pesticide applicator.



Nodding Thistle



Larch Sawfly caterpillars devastating tamarac shelterbelt. There are not many larch trees within the M.D. Hopefully the land owner controls this pest in 2013 or risks losing the shelterbelt.



Horticultural Bus Tour 2012, final stop at Salisbury Greenhouse.



Edgerton Seed Plant Open House and BBQ!