

The Municipal Agricultural Connection



Partners in Rural Conservation
www.mdwainwright.ca



PLUGGED CULVERTS



WASHED OUT ROADS + POTHoles



CALL PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT 780-842-4024



Keep an eye on spruce trees now, Yellow Headed Spruce Sawfly larvae.

FALL WEBWORM OR FOREST TENT CATERPILLARS

Whether you are dealing with Fall Webworms or Forest Tent caterpillars, this year seems to have the right weather conditions to see higher amounts of larvae.

The city of Saskatoon has issued a news release that high numbers of Tent Caterpillars are being witnessed; here in the M.D. of Wainwright web nests are being found. Fall webworms seem to have more of a liking to fruit trees (such as plum and Saskatoon fruit trees) whereas tent caterpillars are not specific and anything green and deciduous will do.

Caterpillar outbreaks are cyclical; and although gruesome looking the large masses of web nests, should not kill the plant (only after successive seasons of total defoliation will the tree be lost). However, there are some things you can do in your yard to control caterpillars that don't involve spraying insecticides. One thing you can do is cut off the branch where the nest or ball of caterpillars are and put it in a plastic bag. Then incinerate the plastic bag so that no larvae escape, causing re-infection.



Have an interesting topic you want discussed in the Newsletter or municipal meeting? Suggestions to Asst. Agricultural Fieldman Aimee Wonsik, asb@mdwainwright.ca

GIANT HOG WEED, COW PARSNIP, WATER HEMLOCK?



Giant Hog Weed, grows up to 5 meters tall, use extreme caution, significant human health risk

Since there is not enough room in this article to have great detail on this subject, here in Alberta, there are no reports of Giant Hogweed (highly invasive, severe human reaction), however it has been found in B.C. & Ontario. However, in the M.D. of Wainwright in the wet, marshy habitats, there is definitely cow parsnip, wild carrot and potentially water hemlock. All these plants look very similar to Giant Hog

Weed when in flower; the difference is the leaves. Be extremely careful with these plants (do not touch with bare skin as there is irritation to humans of varying degrees, depending on plant.) The root of these plants is also of caution for grazing animals, as cattle or horses can become sick or die if forced to eat, especially in the spring when roots are easy to "pull out".



Cow parsnip: large/ broad "palmate" leaves that are NOT shiny or "narrow toothed" shape.

Integrated Pest Management

Scouting, economic thresholds, record keeping, value for farmer!

IPM TECHNIQUE	VALUE TO GROWER	WHAT THE STUDY FOUND	ASSESSMENT ON HOW I DO THIS ON MY FARM
Scout fields to check for insects, weeds, diseases before spraying.	May lead to the discover that a field may not need to be sprayed, or may reduce pesticide use through using spot spray applications.	94% farmers (including family members) scouted for weeds and 88% scouted for diseases or insect problems.	I scout my fields (or insure someone else does) Yes _____ No _____
Scout for pests starting the previous season at key times.	Scouting for pests is something that happens year round, walking out into the field to really see what is going on.	58% scouted the previous fall, 58% scouted just before seeding, 95% scouted early in crop development, 66% scouted late in crop.	I check my fields at least once a week Yes _____ No _____
Make a "no spray" decision based on low levels of pests.	Allows farmers to avoid spraying when it is unnecessary or does not pay off.	14% of farmers made a "no spray" decision based on weed populations, and 36% of growers made a "no treat" decision based on low insect populations.	I occasionally find that my scouting allows me to skip a spray operations that I thought I would have to make. Yes _____ No _____
Use diagnostic tools, kits and weather monitoring to help spray decisions	Excellent kits and disease maps are available for diseases like sclerotinia or bertha army-worm.	Use of kits and diagnostic services were virtually zero. Some growers occasionally used weather reports in their threshold decisions.	I have used diagnostic tools like petal tests and sclerotinia alerts or the provincial pest maps in the past. Yes _____ No _____
Record keeping for pest levels/ spray applications.	Allows for a post season review on how effective the control measure was and allows growers to prepare integrated plans for the next season.	81%-91% recorded products sprayed, rates, dates; 50%-60% recorded weather at spraying and crop stage; less than 50% recorded escapes and effects on pollinators	I keep records for pests in a given field and refer to them from time to time in subsequent years. Yes _____ No _____

Bait Ball for Wireworms

Similar to the cutworms, wireworms can create bald patches in the fields. Wireworm damage is commonly mistaken for cutworm damage. Wireworms shred tissue while cutworms tend to cut off plants or plant parts. The shredding caused by wireworms can kill plants directly or it can just cause enough damage that disease sets in and the weakened plants cannot recover.

Bait balls are made from wheat flour or oatmeal and work by releasing carbon dioxide into the soil which attracts the wireworms. Note that bait balls are good measure of insect presence, not density.

To make a bait ball, mix one to one and a half cups of oatmeal or wheat flour with two table-spoons of honey and up to half a cup of water until mixture sticks together in a ball.

You can put the ball directly into the ground, or tie it up in a mesh bag (onion bag or cheesecloth work well). A mesh bag makes it easier to dig up from the ground. Bury the bait ball four to six inches deep and mark with a flag.

Wait 4-5 days and then check your bait ball to see if there are wireworms, especially if canola is planted in recently cultivated pasture or hay.



Aphids on Spruce Trees



Aphids tend to be an all purpose eater, munching on everything from delphiniums to spruce trees! Aimee Wonsik, Assistant Agricultural Fieldman for the M.D., visited a yard in June where aphids had taken a liking to only one tree in the yard, a small 3 year old white spruce tree (3foot high). The other trees in the yard were unharmed (Blue Colorado Spruce, Caragana, Maple and other white spruce).

After the owner sprayed the tree with 2 applications of household insecticide which seemed to kill the aphids and amazingly in 2 weeks the spruce tree sprouted 6 inches of top growth (obviously happy again, back on track!) Aphids lay eggs and give birth to live young, and can have 6 generations per year allowing them to build up their numbers rapidly. Aphids can be a variety of colours; brown, black, lime green, amber. Signs of aphids include large masses of bugs, almost colonies of different sizes (young and older, little and big). Also, aphids have very soft bodies, and will smear/ squish quite easily.

You will find beneficial bugs, such as ladybugs and (the ugly but good) ladybug larvae helping out, eating from the "pile". Ants present are also a telltale sign of aphids as they feed on "honeydew" that is secreted by the aphids (which causes a black fungus, also a tell-tale sign of aphids.) Continue monitoring your yard and affected plant frequently throughout the growing season, applying insecticide where needed.



Ladybug (at top) and Ladybug larvae (at bottom) are very beneficial to your yard eating aphids and other garden pests!

Prevention is the best form of Pest Control

Rural Routes Supper

Date: Friday, August 9, 2013

Location: Wainwright Elks Hall

- ◆ **Doors Open at 5:30 p.m. (Cash Bar)**
- ◆ **BBQ Steak Supper at 6:30 p.m.**
- ◆ **100 Year Farm Family Awards at 8:00 p.m.**
- ◆ **Kid's door prizes, plus \$500 adult draw to be used at a local agricultural dealer of winners choice**

Registration by August 2nd is required by everyone attending; event is for rural ratepayers of the municipality. Silver plate donation for the Wainwright Area Food Bank will be accepted.

Call the M.D. Office at (780) 842-4454 to register, as available space is limited.

2013 Honoured Families of the 100 Years of Family Farming Award:

1. **Wiley Family (1911)**
2. **McCluskey Family (1910)**



MUNICIPAL PHOTO CONTEST!



Send in your photos before Friday, August 16.

There are 13 chances to win \$100 and have your photo in the 2014 municipal calendar. Stop at the M.D. office for contest forms or go online to mdwainwright.ca and look under Agricultural Service Board section for contest details !

“Lateblight” of Potatoes & Tomatoes

In recent years, Late Blight of potato and tomato has been detected in various parts of Alberta to varying degrees (sometimes severe, sometime minimally).

At this point in the 2013 growing season, Late Blight has **NOT** been detected, however conditions are **EXCELLENT** for the development and spread of Late Blight in most areas of Alberta. The following observed conditions favour the development of Late Blight:

- Significant amounts of moisture, falling in regular intervals (days without any precipitation have been rare).
- High humidity (sometimes approaching 95%)
- Heavy dews and long leaf wetness periods.

- Warmer nights (night time temperatures are not falling below 9°C).

It is recommended that growers of potatoes and tomatoes be extra vigilant to try and catch any diseased material early on, before a significant outbreak can develop. Producers should monitor fields for potentially infected plants. Protective fungicide applications can be made.

If you find plants showing suspicious lesions, it is recommended

that you remove and dispose of infected material as quickly as possible, then incinerate (not compost!) to safely discard the material.

If you have suspect plants, you can contact 310-FARM (3276) to determine if further testing is required and to discuss management. Early awareness will help to prevent and contain an outbreak and not allow spread in your yard to other plants.



Brown, wilted leaves having a burnt appearance indicate blight.

...monitor for suspicious pests!

*Not all plants are weeds,
but all weeds are plants...*

NOXIOUS WEEDS FROM THE FLOWERBED

When deciding if a beautiful perennial plant is an addition to your flowerbed or more along the lines of a pesky weed, one easy way to determine this is to see how “easily” a plant increases where it is growing. If a plant in your flower bed

seems to be spreading out of control, and displacing the other perennials, you can assume that this plant is a weed. Key indicators that a plant has the ability to take over quickly is if it has spreading roots, abundance of seed production, or some plants are known to exude produced bio-chemicals to inhibit the growth of other plants, this is called *alleopathy*. Spotted Knapweed and Leafy Spurge have this characteristic! This is the plants way of ensuring survival so that nothing else grows around it. Leafy Spurge is a double threat, since not only is it alleopathic, it also has creeping, rhizomatous roots reaching 15 feet

in length. Spurge will also “explode” its seeds when it is ripe and mature, shooting them up to 8ft distance or more. Plants like Dames Rocket, have beautiful colour and wonderful fragrance, however the amount of seed produced over their 3 month flowering period quickly can overtake a pasture. Both Dames Rocket and Spurge are categorised as a Noxious Weed under the Weed Control Act; please help control the spread by not growing these perennials.

Dames Rocket produces an abundance of seeds, found in Wainwright town limits.



Aimee standing in a patch of Leafy Spurge, found 1 mile west of Irma on highway 14.



FARMING WITH LARGE SCALE FLOODS

With the natural disaster of the ultimate floods that have occurred, and continue to still cause havoc and despair in the southern Alberta communities of High River, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge; it remains questionable how these areas with fully clean up from the destruction that has been left behind.

The M.D. of Wainwright continues to see an increased amount of moisture in the past few weeks in rain form, and keeping an eye on our own rivers and creeks has seen them to have higher waters in the Battle and Ribstone. Even some M.D. culverts, ditches, low spots, sloughs and roads have been struggling; however nothing to the extent like in the south; and we are thankful of that.

For Farmers in the municipality (that are busy getting their in-crop spraying done with herbicides and fungicides) dodging slough holes, soft ground and rain showers, a few seasonal concerns have occurred to mention. With the increase in moisture, are farmers prepared to be watching out for Fusarium, Clubroot, Blackleg, Sclerotinia and the B.U.G.S. (the Bertha are coming)?

How are the farmers in the south managing; especially considering Fusarium loves moist, wet conditions. How is Clubroot being contained, when potentially contaminated soil is on the move with the water flows. These agricultural pests are far from focus when people are displaced from their homes, but it might be something to think about (after the emergency is cleared) how the farming landscape is

also being impacted. (Did you witness the combines seen on the T.V. news rescuing people from rising floodwaters since they are surprisingly engineered and able to wade through water! Hooray for the farmers helping out!) Consider helping the flooded south if you can; and as mentioned in newsletters previously on farm emergency preparedness, make sure you and your family have a contingency plan in place for different Wainwright-area catastrophes.

One final thought, be aware of the next impending agricultural-pest; the hippos that are floating out the zoo confines...! Alberta wildboar and rats don't hold a candle to a beautiful, wild, (loose) hippopotamus! (sarcastic) A.W.