

# THE MUNICIPAL CONNECTION

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## JOIN THE M.D. AG SERVICE BOARD!

Applications for a farm member are now open for the Municipal Agricultural Service Board (ASB)!

ASBs are special committees appointed by rural municipal councils to address agricultural concerns in their local jurisdictions. The M.D. of Wainwright ASB is comprised of two members of Council, three farm members from the community as well as the Ag Fieldman and Assistant Ag Fieldman.

Applicants must be a resident and/or ratepayer of the M.D. of Wainwright, be familiar with agricultural concerns and issues, and be willing to sit for a four-year term. Farm members are provided remuneration and expenses for attending committee meetings and events. Expected time commitment is four to six meetings per year, including annual Regional and Provincial Conferences, with the possibility of attending other ag related events/tours. Those interested are asked to submit a letter and/or resume, including reasons why they are interested, by October 13th, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. Send applications to Neil at [nloonen@mdwainwright.ca](mailto:nloonen@mdwainwright.ca) or drop them off at the M.D. Administration building at 717 14th Ave Wainwright. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the M.D. office at 780-842-4454.



Welcome  
Autumn!



### NOTICE TO RATEPAYERS

The Municipal Tax Deadline is Thursday November 30, 2023.

Taxes may be paid in person by cash, cheque, or debit at the Administration Office located at 717 14th Ave Wainwright. Office hours are 8:30am - 12pm, 1pm - 4:30pm. Payments may also be made online via online banking and Interac, or by credit card at [www.paysimply.ca](http://www.paysimply.ca)

Payments sent by mail must be post marked no later than November 30, 2023.

A penalty of 12% will be added to all outstanding taxes effective Friday December 1, 2023. Post dated cheques are accepted, drop off box is located in the office main entrance. Call 780-842-4454 with any questions regarding tax payment.

## WINTER WORKSHOP SERIES

As field season is wrapping up, staff are gearing up to plan the winter workshop series. Be sure to watch your mailbox, the M.D. website, or our social media channels for updates on what events are coming up. We can't wait to see YOU there!

## HAVE YOU HEARD?

The M.D. has GPS tracking systems in every vehicle and piece of equipment.

The 3rd Canadian Division Support Base Detachment is one of the M.D.'s largest ratepayers. The M.D. works with the base on a variety of funding and joint projects.

The M.D. is made up of seven Divisions. Each Division has an elected Councillor. Visit [mdwainwright.ca](http://mdwainwright.ca) and click the 'Meet the Councillors' tab to see the Municipal map with the Divisional breakdown, and find out who your area Councillor is.



## CLUBROOT INSPECTIONS

Clubroot of canola is a declared pest under the Agricultural Pests Act in Alberta. This act is the legislative authority for the enforcement of control measures for declared pests in the Province (fun stuff right?). To comply with this piece of legislation, the M.D. is required to carry out annual surveys of canola fields. Municipal policy dictates that two random fields per township are evaluated by appointed inspectors (the ag fieldman and assistant ag fieldman), meaning approximately eighty fields are surveyed per year across the municipality. Inspectors wear fresh protective boot covers and sanitize any equipment that comes in contact with the soil between every site. During the survey approximately 100 canola stems are pulled per field (inspectors only visit swathed/harvested fields and will not survey any standing crop) and the roots are examined for any sign of infection (ie: galls). If clubroot is suspected, tissue and soil samples are gathered for laboratory analysis and confirmation of infection. If a sample tests positive, inspectors are required to issue a notice to the landowner which prohibits them from sowing canola or any crucifer for a period of four years in an effort to prevent the further proliferation of this soil borne disease. To learn more about clubroot management in Alberta, including information about the disease as well as best management practices, visit [alberta.ca](http://alberta.ca) and enter 'clubroot' in the search bar.



(Image of infected roots from the Canola Council of Canada)

## FALL THISTLE CONTROL

If you find yourself looking at the fluffy seed heads of Canada thistle and think you've missed your opportunity for control this year, here is a piece of good news. Fall is actually an excellent time for chemical control of this stubborn creeping perennial. Applying an appropriate herbicide following a hard frost will hit this weed where it hurts. One of the main



reasons Canada thistle is difficult to control is its immense root system. Roots can reach 6-18 feet in depth, and spread laterally over 20 feet. Lateral roots are also capable of prolifically generating clones from their

rhizomatous structures. Following a frost this aggressive species hurries to send its resources underground in preparation for winter, a timely application means it will take herbicide down with it. As far as what herbicide to use, most selective range and pasture designated products will do the job (such as Corteva's Grazon XC, Reclaim II or Restore II). Of course herbicides are not silver bullets, but they are a tool in the toolbox of weed control. An integrated pest management approach is key to the long term success of thistle management. Early grazing while plants and buds are still tender and palatable, and ensuring desirable species are competitive is a great follow up to fall herbicide application.

What kind of things does a farmer talk about when milking cows?  
**Udder nonsense**

Why can't you tell secrets on a farm?  
**Because the corn has ears, and the potatoes have eyes.**

What is a sheep's favorite game?  
**Baaa-dminton**

Who tells chicken jokes?  
**Comedi-hen**

## FIRST DETECTION OF PALE YELLOW IRIS IN THE M.D.

The most cost effective way to deal with invasive species is prevention. The second best is an 'early detection, rapid response' (EDRR) approach. This involves identifying a potential threat at an early stage and responding aggressively to prevent further establishment. The more established an invasive species becomes, the more expensive and difficult it is to eradicate. This approach was put into action this summer when suspected Pale Yellow Iris (a Prohibited Noxious species under the Alberta Weed Control Act, meaning it must be eradicated) was found by chance at Clear Lake during a bank assessment. Ag staff quickly confirmed the identification and removed the plants by digging them up from the roots. The Provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist was notified and partook in a full survey of the lake alongside M.D. staff to look for additional locations. Fortunately, none were found during the search. The site was monitored, and will continue to be for years to come, for any signs of regrowth or germination from seed. If this remote site had not been found and reported, a serious infestation may have developed and the effort and cost required to eradicate it would have become significant. Of course the question becomes, how did it get here? It is sometimes not possible to trace the source of an invader, but possibilities include transportation of seed by birds or wildlife, or garden materials containing seed or rhizomes being dumped in the area. Pale Yellow Iris, though regulated, is sometimes still sold in garden centers and therefore could be in flower beds in the area. Be sure to be on the lookout for Pale Yellow Iris around Clear Lake, or any body of water, and be sure to call it in to the Ag Department if you suspect you have found it. Find the informative fact sheet about Pale Yellow Iris by visiting the Alberta Invasive Species Council website [abinvasives.ca](http://abinvasives.ca)



Photos taken at the Clear Lake site by Shelby Oracheski

## SPOTLIGHT Highlighting rural businesses and entrepreneurs in the M.D. of Wainwright

In the world of golf, creating a strong and thriving community is key to success. This is exactly what local golf professionals Garrett Fraser and Sean Mills have achieved with their PGA-approved practice facility at Clear Lake and main street Wainwright retail location equipped with a high end golf simulator. Since its opening, Big Buck Golf (BBG) has experienced steady growth and has become a hub for both avid golfers and beginners alike.



Bringing BBG to where it is today was no stroke of luck. It took many years of meticulous strategic planning and hard work to convert their passion for golf into a sustainable business. Garrett and Sean knew they needed a solid foundation to build on, so the natural first stage was to construct the driving range and practice facility. Work commenced in 2013 on the scenic property beside Clear Lake, and on July 1st 2015 the PGA-approved facility opened its doors to the public. The golf center provides a convenient rural recreation option, and draws clientele from around the region. It is fully automated, with patrons simply visiting a ball vending machine at their leisure any time from sun up until sun down. The center features a twelve-stall hitting station with a growing array of practice targets sprawling over 325 yards, to test golfers of every skill level. Guests love the challenge of attempting to land a ball not only on groomed greens, but also in donated row boats, or putting a dent in the mini van that was added this past summer. The new addition planned for 2024 is a massive satellite dish. Sean and Garrett continually reinvest the profits earned at the golf center back in to the business, striving for sustained improvement of the facility. The next milestone they are aiming for is to illuminate the range over the next few years.



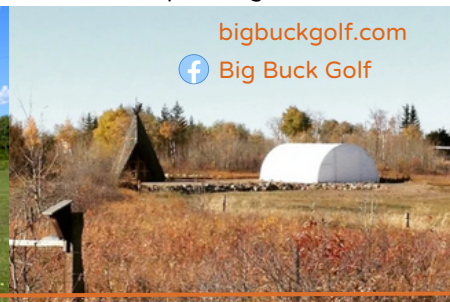
Owners Garrett Fraser and Sean Mills

The success of the golf center and securement of PGA approval was critical for the next stage of the plan. From this foundation, the duo was able to launch a retail partnership program between 2015 and 2021, in which they provided high end inventory to smaller golf courses under a consignment profit sharing type framework. Many courses in the region took advantage of this program and it reached as far as Taber. As we all know, a certain pandemic arrived with a vengeance in 2020. Fortunately for Garrett and Sean, golf happened to be a perfect covid-safe activity and the business flourished. The BBG team soon found themselves at the pivotal crossroad that many entrepreneurs reach, the point at which you can either push harder and expand, meeting increasingly higher demands and challenges, or back down. Sean and Garrett forged on with option 1. The fall of 2021 saw the pair diversify the enterprise and move in to a space of their own in Wainwright. They delved into a new endeavor building lithium solar assisted (FTR) golf carts while also investing attention into developing a retail location and online store. It did not take long for the online store to become a force to be reckoned with, and it remains the flagship platform the business operates on. Through the website, Big Buck Golf has sold product to every province and territory across the country aside from Nunavut. Another perk customers appreciate about the website is the chat box. Aside from Garrett and Sean, three other golf professionals work remotely and are available to provide advice and ensure a high level of customer service to prospective buyers. Not to be outdone, the store is a thriving entity unto itself and is well supported by the local community as well as regionally. BBG has truly made a name for themselves in the golf community and is competing on a level playing field with the retail giants in the industry. Whether you are shopping online or in store, rest assured that BBG will provide you access to top-quality equipment, apparel, and accessories, whether you are upgrading your gear or looking for something new at the same or better prices than you will find at a box store.


In the spirit of continual growth, Garrett and Sean added another element into the mix in October of 2022 when they purchased a high end golf simulator. Something unique being done with this high tech unit is the creation of a membership program. For \$90/month, members have the privilege of year round, unlimited use of the simulator for themselves and guests after hours in the shop. There are a coveted thirty memberships available, so it is no surprise there is a waiting list. For those without a membership looking to access the simulator, there is good news. It has recently been opened to the public for same day bookings during business hours at a highly competitive rate. Most recently, the store has moved in to its own dedicated location on main street Wainwright and is becoming a nucleus for like minded people.

Every business owner has a favorite time of year. When thinking of the golf business, one immediately thinks it must be summer. As it turns out, the cyclical nature of the sport lends joy to every season. Fall brings with it excursions to buying shows to see the new products and technology on the table for the following season. Winter brings hours spent honing skills on the simulator and networking. Spring sees the arrival of those exciting new products carefully selected in the fall and the first rounds of the year when courses begin opening back up. Through their hard work Garrett and Sean have surpassed many milestones and created something to be proud of, though like many small business owners they still share a genuine appreciation for the small moments. Watching someone have a lightbulb moment during a golf lesson, seeing someone's excitement when a new piece of equipment takes their game up a notch, or hearing that a kid caught the golf bug after visiting the golf center are some of their most prized recollections.

This successful, progressive building of a business all sounds like a walk through the park; this of course is not the case. Garrett and Sean encountered plenty of challenges and came up against many steep learning curves in the past decade as they have grown Big Buck Golf from the ground up. But they have been resilient, and aspire to continue deepening their roots. They are nowhere close to their ceiling and have proved that a dream can be achieved when you tap in to your skill set and lean in to the process of methodical planning.



[bigbuckgolf.com](http://bigbuckgolf.com)

 Big Buck Golf

## PRAIRIE STAPLES Round Leaf Hawthorn *Crataegus chrysoarpa* var. *rotundifolia*

Also known as thornapples, May-trees, or whitethorn, round leaf hawthorn is a hardy branching shrub or small tree that can be found in coulees, river valleys or open woods throughout the Province. A member of the rose family, the fruit bares a resemblance to rose hips. These fruits are often referred to as 'haws', hence the name hawthorn. Though haws were occasionally eaten, they can be toxic if consumed in large quantities. The exception seems to be that essence of hawthorn has been used to treat cardiovascular problems in the West for centuries. Most distinctively (and unsurprisingly) hawthorn is typically covered in many long, sharp, slender thorns that can reach up to 7cm in length (pictured bottom right). These thorns were widely utilized as awls and fishhooks throughout history. Hawthorn belongs to a genus of shrubs called *Crataegus*, derived from the Greek word *kratos*, meaning hard or strong in reference to its strong wood. Outside of its natural environment, hawthorn was widely utilized as a hedge species through Europe. Interestingly, in 1944 there were more than 1,500 square miles of hawthorn hedgerows in Normandy. They were so thick and dense that sharpened steel blades had to be welded to the front of almost 600 tanks to penetrate the thickets during WWII.



### ARE YOUR TREES WINTER READY?

As trees are preparing for winter, deep watering (especially following drought conditions) may aid in their resilience during the cold winter months as well as their vigor the following spring. The majority of Alberta receives little moisture during September and October, causing many trees to experience water deficiency going into winter. The main benefit of fall watering is that the moisture acts as an insulator to the soil and most importantly, to the roots of trees. Roots without water around them will be more susceptible to cold damage, which can result in branch dieback and eventual tree death. Cold air in the soil will draw water from roots and create icicles in live root cells. These icicles can damage or kill fine roots causing significant stress to the tree.

Newly planted trees are more prone to winter kill injuries than mature trees, so this extra care is especially important. Be aware that during the winter months coniferous trees may lose water through their needles faster than their roots can absorb it, which will turn needles brown in the spring. This process is called winter browning and has certainly become a common site in the area over the past couple seasons.

Determining optimal timing of watering trees in can only be done by paying attention to your local conditions. A rule of thumb is to wait until deciduous trees have dropped their leaves (this timing can be used even is watering in conifers), but prior to soil freezing when water will be unable to penetrate the soil. Water early in the day, so plants have an opportunity to absorb it before temperatures drop at night.



Note that roots commonly extend a distance equal to the height of the tree, and they should be watered at their dripline (shown to the left), not the trunk. As far as how much to water, aim to provide enough moisture to reach a depth of six to twelve inches in the soil. Watering slowly allows moisture time to soak in deeply, as opposed to running off. Soaker hoses or sprinklers are a great tool to use, however be sure to avoid spraying needles, foliage or the trunk directly.

### PODCAST FAN?

Everyday, there are phenomenal advancements being made in the field of agriculture technology. Whether you're a seasoned pro in precision agriculture, or just getting started, this podcast provides the latest news and information you need for your success in the field.



### CHEMICAL CONTAINER SITES

Reminder: As of January 1st, 2024 the municipal chemical container collection sites located in Irma, Wainwright, Edgerton and Chauvin will be permanently closed. This gradual, phased transition by Cleanfarms has been taking place since 2022 across the province in order to standardize collection of these materials across the country. Chemical container collection will be available at your local ag retail outlet.



While scientists tell us that fall occurs when the Earth tilts away from the sun, the ancient Greeks had a much cooler explanation. According to Greek legend, the season is caused by Persephone's annual return to the underworld, where she rules as Hades' queen. Her mother, Demeter, the goddess of fertility and harvest, is so upset that she allows the worlds crops to wither and fall under a blanket of snow, as she once more awaits her daughter's springtime arrival.