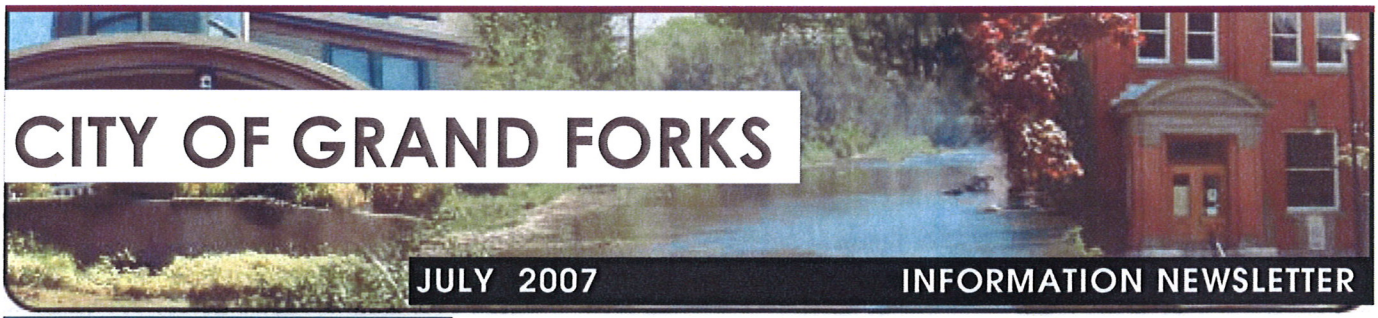


# CITY OF GRAND FORKS

JULY 2007 INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

## HOARY ALYSSUM

Hoary Alyssum (Berteroa incana) can be identified by its small white flowers growing on slender stalks, and flattened oval seedpods. Growing up to 70 cm tall, this species is extremely invasive.

Hoary alyssum is toxic to horses, causing swollen legs, laminitis and severe lameness. Consumption of large quantities can cause diarrhea, leading to dehydration, and can cause abortions in mares. The plant remains toxic after it is dried, and most poisonings are due to contaminated hay.

Small patches of hoary alyssum can be hand-pulled fairly effectively. Ensure you remove the top inch of the root when pulling so the root crown is removed. If weeds are pulled after flowering, or if seeds are present, then the plant material should be either buried or burned or taken to the landfill. Landfills within the RDKB will accept noxious weeds and bury them without charge, so make sure you tell the attendant it is weeds. Weeds must be bagged—double bagged is best to ensure the seeds are not spread during transport to the landfill.

Estimated seed viability of at least nine years makes it very important to dispose of plant material appropriately to minimize spread.

If no seeds are present, the plant material can be composted. Mowing large patches can reduce spread, if mowing is done before the seed is produced and it is as close to the ground as possible, but is not an effective control method. A seedling trial is underway in the Nursery area to explore potential to use crop competition to control this weed.

The main infestation is in the Grand Forks and Granby areas. Management efforts will be increased this year to gain control in core agricultural areas. Isolated infestations are present in the West Boundary and the strategy is to control all infestations.

At present, there is a service offered free of charge to residents in Electoral Areas D & E to help eradicate hoary alyssum and some other noxious weeds. For more information, contact either the RDKB office in Grand Forks, or explore their web site at http://www.rdkb.com/.

Come and meet Barb Stewart, Boundary's own weed coordinator for a lesson on Hoary Alyssum held at City Park. Come prepared with gloves and plastic bags to put this lesson to use pulling this noxious weed. Volunteers will be asked to fan out and pull this weed from the surrounding city streets. It's all over by 11:00 AM. Come and do your part to learn how to control this weed and further beautify our city.

**WEED PULL DAY!!**
**SATURDAY, JULY 28th**
**9:00—11:00 AM**
**Meet at City Park**


**CITY OF GRAND FORKS**

7217 4th Street, Box 220
Grand Forks, BC. V0H 1H0

Phone: 250-442-8266
Fax: 250-442-8000
Email: info@grandforks.ca
Web: www.city.grandforks.bc.ca

# PINE BEETLE INFESTATION

Western and mountain pine beetle populations are on the rise in the Boundary Area. These insects are serious pests of native and exotic pines. Recent infestations have killed trees in some areas of Grand Forks. Unfortunately, the future outlook is bleak. In spite of control efforts, beetle populations are increasing in surrounding forest and spilling over into urban areas, similar to the previous pattern seen in Kamloops, Prince George and other B.C. cities and towns. Some trees have been infected in City Park and have been disposed of this year.

**HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE PINE BEETLE?**

Look for these signs:

- Entire crown (all of the foliage) turns yellow, then red
- Bark bears regular pattern of "pitch tubes" where beetles have bored into the bark; boring dust may also be present
- Woodpeckers peeling the bark to get at the beetles
- Live beetles or tiny white grubs and a characteristic pattern of tunnels are revealed when bark is pulled away
- Beetles eventually stain the wood blue due to a fungus that is introduced.

If these signs are evident, the tree should be removed and properly disposed of before beetles are allowed to re-emerge.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

**Infested trees must be treated to destroy beetle brood. (e.g. debarked, burned, chipped or thoroughly buried). DO NOT store infested wood or use it as firewood unless it has been treated. Some references suggest that plastic sheeting may prevent beetle emergence but this is NOT a reliable method.**

**OPTIONS TO HELP PREVENT PINE BEETLE ATTACK**

There are no guaranteed solutions to prevent pine beetle attack, but following are some options that have shown promise:

**Remove and dispose of infested trees**

Existing infested trees need to be identified and properly disposed of first, before you consider any prevention of future problems.

**Keep your trees healthy**

Trees that are drought-stressed, topped, poorly pruned, injured, root damaged or buried in fill will be more susceptible to beetle attack. Avoid pruning live branches during the spring or summer, as beetles may be attracted to pruning wounds. Water your trees in the summer if possible, but don't over-water. Be very careful with fertilizers; application of nitrogen fertilizers may actually make the tree more susceptible to attack.


*Front and Side View of the Mountain Pine Beetle*

**Consider thinning out larger pine stands**

If you have a large stand of trees, consider thinning them out, preferably during the winter so that beetles are not attracted to freshly cut stumps. Research suggests that thinning can help prevent beetle attack in forested stands. As a minimum guideline, thin trees so that the crowns do not touch (about 50-200 stems per hectare). This also helps reduce fire hazard.

**Monitor your trees on a regular basis**

Hire a professional to help monitor your trees periodically or get some training to ensure that you know what to look for yourself. Western pine beetle can attack trees anytime between April-October, while mountain pine beetle generally attacks from late June to October. If you find early signs of attack, hire a professional to ensure that infested trees are disposed of promptly and properly.

**Pesticides**

Sevin (carbaryl) is registered for mountain pine beetle control. Spraying a mature pine tree is potentially hazardous and subject to a number of environmental regulations, and should only be attempted by a professional; check your phone book yellow pages for listings under "pest management". Other injectable pesticides such as "ace caps" are not registered for this purpose and research has shown that they DO NOT WORK.

**Verbenone**

Verbenone is a natural repellent that is produced by the beetles to indicate when a tree is "full". Verbenone is now registered for use against the mountain pine beetle. However, recent research suggests that verbenone is not very effective when beetle populations are high.

**Fibreglass insect screen**

As early as 1926, wire mesh screen was wrapped around trees to try and prevent beetle attack. Several early attempts were promising and it was found that it was only necessary to wrap the lower 25 feet of the trunk to prevent mountain pine beetle, but early researchers felt that it might not work as well with western pine beetle as they sometimes attack higher in the tree. Fibreglass insect screen, the same material used in screen doors, is stapled on to the bark. This material is relatively inexpensive and is available in large rolls. The lower branches are first pruned up, although it is possible to wrap the material around large branches. The beetles will try to gain entrance through any gaps or seams in the mesh, therefore, wrap the trees vertically with only a single seam which is sealed with a silicone caulking compound. This technique is more environmentally friendly than pesticides and may also offer several years of protection whereas pesticides would need to be reapplied.

## WATER USAGE AND WATERING POLICY

A total of five wells supply the entire water needs for residential & commercial needs for the City. During months of October to March, one well with a capacity of 1,700,000 gallons a day is able to supply the entire City. The water usage rises commencing April to September with peak usage from June to August.

During peak months, all pumps are running 24 hours a day. This is a cause for concern as mechanical systems do fail with wear & tear arising from continuous running. There is no back-up system. Ideally the water system should have one well on standby so that in case of failure of any one of the 4 wells, the 5th well can be activated. Pumps & reservoirs are interconnected. As reservoir & pressure in the system falls, pumps automatically start to maintain a preset level. During nighttime when water usage is expected to be less, it provides time for the reservoir to refill to the preset level. It has been observed that more and more irrigation systems are running after the hours approved in the Water Usage Policy preventing the reservoir to refill and provide "rest" for the pumps. This is an extremely dangerous situation to be in without a full reservoir before the start of the peak usage times.

When the current water usage levels are extremely high, all 5 wells are running at full capacity with no back-up system.

In 2006, for the months of June, July, and August the total usage was 288,000,000 gallons. The highest one day usage was 4,360,000 gallons. This left no room for back up supply in case of emergencies. This year's usage in June & July is running 7% higher than 2006.

Water should not be considered as unlimited resource. There is not enough quality drinking water in the Grand Forks aquifer. Nitrates are creeping into areas where the City's wells are and where the future well is expected.

A new well will cost over $1 million to bring on-line. Before the City spends this money & increases rates by more than $100 per ratepayer, it is prudent to implement conservation measures. Government Grants are difficult to obtain unless there are conservation measures in place & working. Current residential rate for water is $286.60 per year. The conservation measures are minimizing irrigation and non-essential use of water such as running taps for long periods of time, leaving hoses running, open-ended cooling systems, leaking taps & continuous water running in washroom & toilet facilities. The City has taken steps to curb irrigation in parks and gardens.

Water ratepayers are encouraged to conserve and use water wisely. Ratepayers will save money. Please cooperate and follow the water usage guidelines provided in the City's previous newsletters.

## WHAT IS A CROSS-CONNECTION?

**(PART ONE — ON "SAFE DRINKING WATER")**

Even though your drinking water is thoroughly treated and tested, contaminants can enter the water supply within your home through a "Cross-Connection".
A cross-connection is a direct arrangement of a piping line which allows the potable water supply to be connected to a line or distribution system where chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants may come into contact with the potable water.

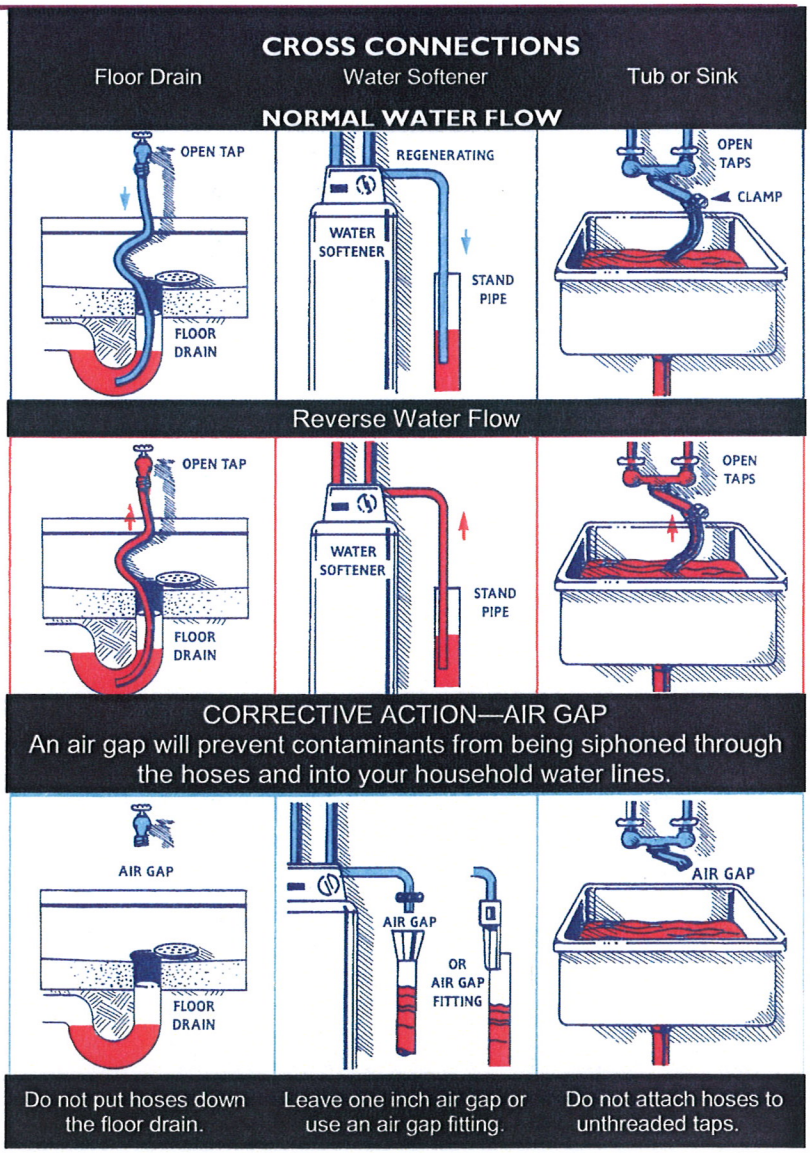
***Pollutants*** from a cross-connection can be non-hazardous to human health, causing aesthetic problems such as taste, odor, and color problems.
***Contaminants*** from a cross-connection can be toxic, causing illness or death to those who unsuspectingly consume the contaminated water.

**INDOOR FIXTURES**

Examples of indoor cross-connection is the common garden hose attached to a water hose bib with the other end of the hose submerged in a service sink or tub full of detergent or to a floor drain, or a supply line connected to a water softener fed into a stand pipe (such as the examples shown on the top 3 pictures to the right).

During a backflow event, (center 3 pictures) these pollutants/contaminants could be drawn or pushed back into the potable water system.
An air gap or a backflow prevention assembly installed at every point of cross connection prevents polluted/contaminated water from entering the potable water distribution system. (as shown on the bottom 3 examples)

*(next newsletter(s) will contain information on vacuum breakers for backflow prevention & outdoor cross connections )*



# INNOVATIVE CLEAN ENERGY FUND (ICE)

The Provincial Government is taking steps to establish the Innovative Clean Energy (ICE) fund identified in the new Energy Plan through an amendment to the Social Service Tax Act.

The BC Energy Plan: A Vision for Clean Energy Leadership, announced in February 2007, identified a $25-million ICE Fund to support projects that will:

- address specific B.C. energy and environmental problems identified by government;
- showcase B.C. technologies that have a strong potential for international market demand because they solve problems that exist both in B.C. and other jurisdictions;
- support pre-commercial energy technology that is new, or commercial technologies not currently used in B.C.; and
- demonstrate commercial success for new energy technologies.

The new amendment will allow a proposed 0.4 per cent levy on sales of electricity, natural gas, grid propane and fuel oil that are non-transportation related. A cap of $500,000 per year will be set for high-use energy customers. For every $100.00 of usage, the consumer will pay 40 cents.

The average home in B.C. using natural gas space heating and electricity for the balance of energy needed will pay approximately $8 dollars per year.

The levy is expected to be implemented by the Province by October of 2007.

The electrical utility invoice you receive from either the City or Fortis will show this charge which will be subject to Provincial Sales Tax but not GST. Terasen Gas invoices will also show this charge.

Initial indications are that the Provincial Government will collect up to a maximum $25 Million for the ICE Fund. This is expected to take 12 to 16 months. After that time it is expected that the charge will then be removed from invoices.

# PROPOSED ANTI-IDLING BYLAW

The Boundary Air Quality Committee (BAQC), has asked Council to enact an Idling Bylaw to regulate unnecessary idling of vehicles. In this bylaw, "Idle" and "Idling" mean the operation of an internal combustion engine of a vehicle while the vehicle is not in motion; "vehicle" means a rubber-tired or tracked vehicle that is designated to be self-propelled by an internal combustion engine but does not include a motor-assisted cycle or a vehicle operated wholly, or in part, by an electric motor. No person shall cause or permit a vehicle to "Idle" for more than 3 consecutive minutes. This bylaw would ***not*** apply to passengers embarking or disembarking, idling because of traffic, an emergency or mechanical difficulties, armoured vehicles involved in the secure delivery and pick up of goods, emergency vehicles, vehicles engaged in a parade or a race, vehicles engaged in a mechanical test or maintenance procedure for which idling is required, vehicles idling for the purpose to power a heating or a refrigeration system for preservation of perishable cargo, or to power any tools or equipment necessary for or incidental to the provision of services by a municipality or public utility, or idling due to outside temperatures being below freezing or above 20 degrees Celsius. Person(s) in contravention of this bylaw would be subject to fines.

Public comments in relation to this by-law are welcomed.

## NOTICE OF SCHEDULE ***CHANGE*** TO WATER REGULATIONS APPLIES ***ONLY TO AUTOMATIC TIMED UNDERGROUND SPRINKLERS***

**AUTOMATIC TIMED UNDERGROUND SPRINKLERS**

Those premises with "even" numbered civic addresses may sprinkle of "even" numbered days (ie: 2nd, 4th, 6th, etc)
Those premises with "odd" numbered civic addresses may sprinkle on "odd" numbered days (ie: 1st, 3rd, 5th, etc)

EITHER
From 12:00 am (Midnight) until 4:00 am
OR
From 7:00 am until 9:00 am
And
From 7:00 pm until 9:00 pm
BUT NOT BOTH

**AUTOMATIC TIMED UNDERGROUND SPRINKLERS**

On the 31st day of any month:

EITHER
From 12:00 am (Midnight) until 4:00 am
OR
Those premises with "even" numbered civic addresses may sprinkle in the mornings from
7:00 am until 9:00 am
And, those premises with "odd" number civic addresses may sprinkle in the evenings from
7:00 pm until 9:00 pm
BUT NOT BOTH

All other regulations outlined in last month's newsletters remain the same regarding Manual Sprinklers, Newly Planted Lawns and Landscapes, Flower Gardens, and Vegetable Gardens.