

Frequently Asked Questions – Lanark County Vegetation Management

1. What is a noxious weed and what is the intent the Weed Control Act?

Wild parsnip was added to the [noxious weed list](#) by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in 2015. OMAFRA has a [FAQ page](#) that answers questions like what is the Weed Control Act and what is a noxious weed. In general, a species designated as a noxious weed under the [Weed Control Act](#) is one that:

- Is difficult to manage on agricultural land once established and will reduce the yield and quality of the crop being grown;
- Negatively affects the health and well-being of livestock; or
- Poses a risk to the health and well-being of agricultural workers.

Under the [Weed Control Act](#), Lanark County is required to destroy any noxious weed within our possession. The intent of the Weed Control Act is to reduce (1) the infestation of noxious weeds that negatively impact agriculture; (2) plant diseases by eliminating plant disease hosts; and (3) health hazards to livestock and agricultural workers.

2. Why does Lanark County control Wild Parsnip in the roadside?

Lanark County controls Wild Parsnip in the roadside because it is a noxious weed that causes damages to agriculture and a poisonous plant that poses a health risk to people. The [Weed Control Act](#) requires Lanark County to destroy any noxious weed within our possession.

Controlling Wild Parsnip in the roadside (1) reduces the impact of wild parsnip on agriculture; (2) maintains public safety for volunteers (e.g. Adopt-A-Road groups), workers (e.g. cutting around guidrails, repair and erecting of road signs), motorists, and emergency personnel required at times to enter the roadside; and (3) prevents the spread of Wild Parsnip that may degrade and choke out desirable vegetation for pollinators.

3. What is the difference between boom and spot spraying with herbicides?

The difference between boom spraying and spot spraying is the method of herbicide application. For boom spraying the herbicide is applied uniformly over the entire treated area usually from a boom arm with nozzles that broadcast the product. For spot spraying the herbicide is targeted to a specific plant or patch using a handheld spray gun and reel.

4. What is the Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) Plan and how is it applied to invasive / noxious weeds, specifically Wild Parsnip?

The [Integrated Vegetation Management \(IVM\) Plan](#) is a document created by experts in vegetation management, which was adopted by Lanark County in 2016. The plan provides an overview to IVM for noxious and invasive weeds and brush within Lanark County. The plan is based on IVM principles and promotes the integrated approach of using chemical control measures where required and mechanical control measures as they become practical and effective.

Lanark County applies the IVM Plan to Wild Parsnip by using it as a guideline for decisions on how to control it. Control measures for Wild Parsnip including herbicides, hand digging / pulling, mowing, and clipping. We base our decisions for mechanical vs chemical control on infestation levels. Generally, medium to heavy infestations are controlled by boom spraying, light infestations are controlled by spot spraying and very light infestations are controlled by hand, with some exceptions.

5. Why does Lanark County use herbicides to control Wild Parsnip?

Lanark County uses herbicides when mechanical control measures, such as hand pulling and mowing, are not effective in controlling Wild Parsnip due to the volume of Wild Parsnip on County roads and logistical constraints with mowing and digging by hand.

By 2016, the volume of Wild Parsnip on County roads was very high and infestations were consistent on most roads. Wild Parsnip dominated most of the roadside in Lanark County. Based on the [Integrated Vegetation Management \(IVM\) Plan](#) herbicides were the primary choice of control because the volume of Wild Parsnip was too high for hand digging and mowing would suppress growth and not eradicate it.

Logistically, it is difficult to control Wild Parsnip with mowing as the main control measure. With over 1120 lane kilometers of roadway, mowing all roads takes time and not every roadside can be mowed fence to fence due to rocky and uneven terrain. Additionally, mowing does not eradicate Wild Parsnip but in fact when done at the wrong time spreads the seeds increasing areas of infestation. Consistent bi-weekly mowing would be required because the plant re-flowers quickly after it has been cut. Lastly, fence to fence mowing reduces all vegetation in the roadside, including desirable plants like wildflowers that provide competition for Wild Parsnip and habitat for pollinators.

6. What is the long-term plan to control Wild Parsnip?

The long-term plan to control Wild Parsnip is to improve public awareness, shrink infestations, and reduce the intensity of control. Following the [Integrated Vegetation Management \(IVM\) Plan](#), the goal is to move from high to low intensity control. When infestations are high, chemical control measures are required, but when infestations are low, alternative control measures like hand digging may be effective and feasible. Since 2016, reliance on herbicides has dramatically diminished and hand control measures have increased significantly. We expect this trend to continue and we consistently push for more mechanical control.

Roadside restoration is another long-term goal that the County invests in every year to provide natural competition for Wild Parsnip once it has been removed and to improve pollinator habitat along roadsides. As Wild Parsnip infestations continue to decline, the remaining open space in the roadside needs to be filled by other desirable plants that help prevent re-infestations. We accomplish restoration by seeding and planting in the roadsides and by reducing mowing. Generally, Lanark County only mows 1 swath adjacent to the roadside because consistent mowing can weaken native plants. By leaving sections of the roadside unmowed, it allows the remaining area to naturalize with native plants and provides habitat for pollinators.

7. What is the NAPPC Pollinator Roadside Management Award?

In recognition of Lanark County's efforts to implement an Integrated Vegetation Management Plan with long-term goals for pollinators, Lanark County was the very first in Canada to receive the Pollinator Roadside Management Award for Counties from the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC).