

Z150-01
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From: ()
Sent: August 4, 2009 9:46 AM
To: MayorandCouncil
Cc: Stephen Jenkins; Anne Mooi
Subject: Hogweed

Dear Mayor and Council

I was glad to see the report from an observant citizen about invasive giant hogweed in the West Bay area (Council package, Monday, July 27). There are infestations elsewhere of this very damaging weed that for some years Parks seems to have lacked staff and resources to monitor and effectively control. As you may know, it is actually hazardous, can cause serious burns, even temporary blindness, so professional method -- not just chopping, a stimulus to re-growth -- is mandatory. Giant hogweed, and the equally vigorous invader, Japanese knotweed, both need special treatment.

Stem injection by a certified operator is reliably reported as the only effective way to eradication. It is in use now in the western U.S, in England and in Surrey, B.C., the latter with a generous budget specifically for invasives' management. Burnaby has a hogweed web site, as does Work Safe B.C. I am told a 'hot line' is in effect in some jurisdictions. The national and international drive is on, to deal responsibly with these plagues and it's time we are seen to join it. What about a Parks flyer to residents, to assist them in identifying invasives and to phone in? Including a warning about the health hazards of hogweed?

By injection, the plant is killed where it stands thus also solving the problem of effective disposal. It is widely held that incineration is the only way to be sure of avoiding regeneration of invasive waste removed by traditional methods because even industrial composting is not guaranteed to develop sufficient heat. It would be sadly counter-productive if we have been for years returning composted soil to the environment with live spores or seeds ready to promptly re-propagate. I understand that at present all green waste is indiscriminately lumped together and held at the yard to await composting. The West Bay hogweed too? To rise again another day?

My immediate purpose is to ask that our Parks department be allocated sufficient staff and resources for an organized invasives' programme rather than just a band-aid response to spot complaints.

Thank you
Yours sincerely
Sheena Vennesland

(It's not necessary to delete my name)

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