



Giant Hogweed Legislative Approach, Common Messaging and Outreach

Giant Hogweed Municipal Workshop

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Legislative Approach

- Weed Control Act of Ontario
 - Noxious Weeds
- Property Standards By-law
 - Nuisance Weeds
- Town Weed Inspector
- Local By-law Enforcement Officer



Legislation

- No federal or provincial legislation which prohibits bringing Giant Hogweed into Canada
- In Canada, no federal or provincial legislation designating it as a noxious weed
- The U.S. has designated it under the Federal Noxious Weeds Act (1974)
 - Must be reported and controlled when found
 - Importation or interstate movement is illegal



Weed Control Act of Ontario

Intent

- To reduce the infestation of noxious weeds that negatively impact agriculture and horticulture
- Reduce plant diseases by eliminating plant disease hosts (e.g. barberry, European buckthorn)
- Reduce health hazards to livestock caused by poisonous plants



Weed Control Act of Ontario

- States that all property owners are responsible for destroying noxious weeds on their property
- Unless weeds or weed seeds are deemed by the Weed Inspector to be far enough away from land used for agricultural or horticultural purposes
- If property owner fails to comply with the Act, Weed Inspector may have the weeds destroyed and charge the costs against the land in taxes



Noxious Weeds

- ‘Noxious’ means harmful to living things, injurious to health
- In Ontario, 23 weeds are considered noxious under the Weed Control Act
- Basis of the list relates to species which could negatively impact agriculture or horticulture



Noxious Weeds List

- Bull Thistle
- Canada Thistle
- Colt's Foot
- Common Barberry
- Cypress Spurge
- Dodder
- European Buckthorn
- Goat's Beard
- Johnson Grass
- Knapweed
- Leafy Spurge
- Milkweed
- Nodding Thistle
- Poison Hemlock
- Poison Ivy
- Proso Millet, Black Seeded
- Ragweed
- Russian Thistle
- Scotch Thistle
- Sow Thistle
- Tuberous Vetching
- Wild Carrot
- Yellow Rocket



Noxious Weeds

- Currently the list does not include Giant Hogweed
- Movement to have it added to the provincial noxious weeds list
 - Resolution passed by Huron-Kinloss Township which encouraged other municipalities to pass similar resolutions
 - Halton Hills, Milton and Mississauga endorsed the Huron-Kinloss Township resolution



Noxious Weeds

- Including Giant Hogweed as a noxious weed would provide better means of control by allowing immediate action to be taken to destroy the plant by an appointed weed inspector
- Injuries to livestock have been attributed to Giant Hogweed but it typically has not been regarded as an agricultural weed



Weed Control Act

- Municipalities may add to this by passing a local By-law for local enforcement
- 10(1) A council of an upper-tier or single-tier municipality that has appointed an area weed inspector or a council of a local municipality that has appointed a municipal weed inspector may by by-law designate as a local weed any plant that is not a noxious weed
- Halton Hills has included Giant Hogweed as a 'Nuisance Weed' under their Community Standards By-Law



Halton Hills

Community Standards By-law

- Requires that every landowner shall destroy and remove all Nuisance Weeds and weed seed on their lands, (farmland and natural areas excluded)
- ‘Nuisance Weed’ means any of the weeds in Schedule A, including poison ivy, ragweed, thistles or any other plant that may cause allergic reactions or health problems for individuals



Halton Hills

Community Standards By-law

- Requires that every Property including vacant lands and agricultural lands outside the urban boundaries as defined in the Town's Official Plan shall be kept free of Noxious Weeds pursuant to the Weed Control Act



Milton

Property Standards By-law

- “Property Maintenance and Occupancy Standards By-law”
- By-law requires that heavy undergrowth, noxious weeds and locally designated weeds under the Weed Control Act shall be eliminated from a yard or agricultural lands
- No list of locally designated weeds

Burlington Nuisance Weed and Tall Grass Control By-law



- Includes list of Nuisance weeds does not include Giant Hogweed
- By-law requires that grass and weeds be cut when they exceed 30 cm
- City enforces Weed Control Act



Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Act

- Pesticide Ban Act regulates the use of pesticides across Ontario
- Ban prohibits the sale of pesticides for cosmetic purposes
- Public health or safety: Pesticides can be used to control plants that are poisonous to the touch, such as poison ivy and Giant Hogweed
- Municipalities are able to spray the prescribed pesticide under the Ministry of Environment Pesticide Regulations because giant hogweed is considered a poisonous plant



Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Act

- Homeowners can still purchase and use certain pesticides in and around their homes to:
 - control wasps or mosquitoes
 - eradicate plants that pose health and safety risks when touched such as poison ivy or giant hogweed
 - protect the health of pets
 - avoid structural damage to the home



ONT. REG. 63/09 made under the Pesticides Act

- Allows for the use of a pesticide to restore natural resources by an employee of MNR, Conservation Authority or a licensed exterminator
- The purpose is:
 - to control an invasive species that may be detrimental to the health of persons or the environment or economy of Ontario
 - to benefit a species of flora or fauna that is native to Ontario through the protection of the species or its habitat, or restoration or management of the species' habitat
 - to protect or restore a rare ecosystem
- The use of the pesticide would be in accordance with integrated pest management principles



Common Messaging and Outreach

- Important to increase public awareness both from a health hazard perspective and to prevent further introductions and range expansion of Giant Hogweed
- General Public Outreach - Conservation Halton has prepared a Giant Hogweed Fact Sheet, articles in Focus, website information



Common Messaging and Outreach

- Conservation Halton is working closely with landowners in the identification and recommend removal strategies of invasive species, including Giant Hogweed
- Fact sheets, information sessions, letters to landowners, landowner contact through Conservation Halton's stewardship program



Common Messaging and Outreach

- Work with OMAFRA to research suitable control measures for Giant Hogweed at Scotch Block
- Implement control of Giant Hogweed at Scotch Block and provide as an example of successful control measures to other partners



Conclusions

- Petition the province to include Giant Hogweed on the Noxious Weed List
- Petition the province to prohibit the import or sale of invasive species such as Giant Hogweed
- Municipalities consider listing Giant Hogweed as a nuisance weed or locally designated weed



Conclusions

- Work with the local and regional municipalities and Health Units in drafting strategies for control of Giant Hogweed
- Work with OMAFRA to research suitable control measures for Giant Hogweed at Scotch Block
- Total eradication is unlikely but range expansion can be prevented by strategic management and public education