

THE MUNICIPAL CONNECTION

August 2022 Volume 16, Issue 4



CALENDAR PHOTO CONTEST

Help us celebrate the diversity within the M.D. of Wainwright by participating in our annual calendar photo contest! Winning photos will each receive a \$100 cash prize and be displayed in a beautiful twelve month calendar. Visit mdwainwright.ca or visit our Facebook page for full contest details. Deadline for submission is August 12th, 2022.



PODCAST FAN?

Overcome today's toughest farming challenges with the latest innovations, agronomy tips, best practices, and more as host Andrew Campbell welcomes leading ag experts and trusted industry voices to chat about the hottest topics in Canadian agriculture on the Pioneer Made To Grow Podcast.

ROADSIDE MOWING

The roadside mowing program commenced on July 15th and will be completed no later than August 31st. Mowing improves site lines along traffic corridors and reduces the risk of collision with wildlife. This program is administered by the Agricultural Services Department and completed by contractors. Please note that mowers will honor existing swaths in the ditch for haying purposes, however if there is no existing swath all designated roads will be mowed. Mowing locations have been predetermined, not all roads will be mowed. Visit mdwainwright.ca to view the 2022 mowing map. For questions or concerns regarding this program please call 780-842-4454.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

The M.D. of Wainwright is a partner to the Wainwright Airport, with active members on its board and providing support through funding.

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

The M.D. has golf courses at both Riverdale and Arm Lake.



MUNICIPAL BURSARIES

The M.D. of Wainwright is proud to announce the creation of two \$1,000 bursaries available to municipal ratepayers/residents! This program is intended to provide financial support and incentive to students in order to pursue post-secondary education. The M.D. of Wainwright Agricultural Service Board Bursary is available to those pursuing an education in an Agricultural or Environmental program and the M.D. of Wainwright Education Bursary is available to those enrolled in post-secondary education at an accredited college, university or trade school in any program.

The deadline for application is September 1st, 2022. Applications and full details can be found online at mdwainwright.ca or picked up at the Administration Building.



AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES IN ALBERTA

You've heard about invasive species before, such as weeds, but did you know there is a whole host of aquatic invasive species (AIS) knocking at Alberta's door?

AIS are non-native organisms that have been brought from other places into Alberta's water. These species cause, or have high potential to cause, harm to our environment, economy, and human health as they become established outside their natural range. Many AIS are very difficult to eradicate once they are established, so prevention is essential. Working closely with a variety of stakeholders, Alberta Environment and Parks has developed a program that includes components of monitoring, rapid response planning, education and outreach, watercraft inspections and policy to protect Alberta's waters.

An Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection Rapid Response Plan (available to view online) has been developed to guide response actions for detecting, assessing and responding to AIS introduction in Alberta. This plan provides a consistent framework for response as well as to identify the roles and responsibilities of government and stakeholders. Keeping Alberta waters free of AIS is a high priority, and the province has formed an Inter-Provincial Territorial Agreement for Co-ordinated Regional Defense Against Invasive Species to keep these invaders out.

Legislation governing AIS include the Fisheries (Alberta) Act, which identifies 52 prohibited species, all of which are illegal to import, transport, sell and possess in the province of Alberta. The Alberta government also recognizes a few additional species as being 'of concern'. Of these species, 27 varieties of fish, 16 plants, 11 invertebrates and 8 diseases are named. Visit abinvasives.ca to learn about these aquatic threats.

What can you do to help protect Alberta's waters from AIS? Visit abinvasives.ca or the Government of Alberta website to familiarize yourself with the below campaigns which outline simple actions we can all take to help reduce the risk of introducing AIS to our treasured Alberta waters.



Releasing domestic pond water, fish or other aquatic species (dead or alive) is illegal.



It is illegal to transport a boat with the drain plug in. Violation of this law could result in fines up to \$100,000.



These simple steps are crucial for protecting Alberta's waters.

A LOOK AT INVASIVE MUSSELS

Invasive mussels attach to hard substrates in the water, blanketing any surface and reproducing at extremely fast rates. Females can produce up to one million eggs every year, and there is no natural predator in Alberta. Quagga and zebra mussels move from lake to lake by attaching themselves to boats and other recreational equipment. The adults can survive for 30 days out of water, while the veligers (larval stage) can survive in standing water for long periods of time.

If a mussel infestation occurred in Alberta, the province is estimating a total cost of \$75 million annually to protect and replace water operated infrastructure (such as drinking water systems, power generation and irrigation), and in lost revenue from recreational fishing. This estimate includes decreasing property values and increased boat maintenance costs for the individual Albertan.

These invaders are one of the species inspectors at watercraft stations are keeping a close eye out for. There are even trained mussel sniffing dogs aiding in inspections. Zebra and quagga mussels can be miniscule (as seen in the bottom left photo) and spread aggressively. The bottom right photo depicts a PVC pipe in an infested lake being completely taken over in a six month period.

In 2021, a near miss occurred when miniscule invasive mussels were discovered on moss balls being imported to pet stores across the province. Thanks to the framework described above, this situation was rapidly responded to and mitigated.



Information collected from the government of Alberta website and the Alberta Invasive Species Council.

Do you think you've spotted a quagga or zebra mussel? Remember, an attached mussel is an invasive mussel. Report it to Alberta's invasive species hotline at 1-855-336-BOAT (2628).



There is nothing quite like a bouquet of fresh flowers to brighten any space or any day. A crisp perfume and beautiful colors simply do good for the soul. Rachelle Lingley, the woman behind Rocky Ridge Flower Farm, strives to bring that good into the homes and lives of her patrons.

After deciding not to return to work following her last maternity leave, Rachelle seized the opportunity to explore creating her own business. She was inspired by the social media accounts of several flower farms and decided this was the avenue she wanted to explore. In 2017 she tested the waters of entrepreneurship by growing her first flowers and crafting her first bouquets. 2018 saw her making things official, creating social media accounts and selling her bouquets publicly. The business was reshaped in 2019 to become what it is today, a locally homegrown flower subscription service. Customers are now able to subscribe to a spring and/or summer service, where they receive a lovingly arranged bouquet of Rachelle's finest flowers for pickup in Irma and Wainwright on a weekly basis.

Almost all flowers originating from Rocky Ridge are grown from seed by Rachelle herself. She works primarily with annual varieties and can be found carefully coaxing seeds to germinate in her basement as early as January. From there her plants are encouraged to flourish under her watchful eye in her home built greenhouse, which is heated by a refurbished pellet stove, before nestling in to attentively tended flower beds outside. As all gardeners know, you are at the mercy of mother nature when working outdoors and each year has presented its own unique challenges. Last years drought conditions and this years cool and wet spring were tests, but Rocky Ridge overcame the weather woes and still produced stunning blossoms. Also challenging are insects. Rachelle values the beneficial species that aid in keeping pests at bay, avoiding pesticide use whenever practical. But even those beneficial species become troublesome in the cut flower business, as most purchasers prefer not to bring these little helpers in to their homes! Even bees can become an issue, as blossoms have a shorter life once pollinated. To combat this Rachelle often harvests flowers before the blooms have opened, which avoids pollination and blooms becoming home to other insects. This is beneficial to customers as well, as they are able to enjoy watching the blooms unfold themselves when they get their bouquet home.

Of course there was a learning curve. Growing flowers for use as cut stems is different than growing them simply for the purpose of admiring them in your flower bed. Even seasoned gardeners would face the

challenging task of growing plants as upright, tall and straight as possible, timing pruning to encourage multiple stalks to form, and planning ahead at the seed starting stage so that blooms will be opening at the appropriate time. Rachelle does not profess to be a natural green thumb but you certainly wouldn't know that when admiring one of her bouquets. The time expended learning the necessary skills is evident, though this humble gardener claims this is mainly due to trial and error.

Rachelle enjoys the peaceful time caring for her plants and preparing beautiful bouquets, and continually striving to learn and improve her skills. As a lover of photography she also finds a lot of joy behind the lens capturing her color rich blooms, especially when it comes to her personal favorites of tulips in the spring and snapdragons in the summer months. Her skill in this area is obvious when viewing her carefully curated social media accounts and website. Through the winter months, you can find Rachelle crafting festive wreaths using fresh greens for the Christmas season before she heads back to the basement to begin the process all over again for the next seasons flowers.

Looking forward, Rachelle hopes to maintain the business at its current size as she juggles her three young children, farm, and outside work. She enjoys watching as the children become more interested in the flowers and the potential for growing the business down the road.

"A flower's appeal is in its contradictions — so delicate in form yet strong in fragrance, so small in size yet big in beauty, so short in life yet long on effect." — Terri Guillemets

Rocky Ridge Flower Farm

rockyridgeflowerfarm

rockyridgeflowerfarm@hotmail.com

rockyridgeflowerfarm.square.site



PRAIRIE STAPLES

Chokecherry - *Prunus virginiana*

A member of the rose family, chokecherry is a common shrubby species found throughout much of the Province in dry open areas, and bordering aspen forests. Its fragrant, bright white flowers draw the eye in May and June before its branches become laden with dark fruit. Chokecherry may be confused with pin cherry, though they can easily be differentiated by their leaves and fruit. Though both have finely toothed leaf margins, upon closer inspection one will notice that the chokecherry 'teeth' come to a sharp point, whereas pin cherry is rounded. Upon fruit set, chokecherry produces a very dark colored berry, while pin cherry yields a bright red berry. Several wildlife species consume the tart fruit, from birds to bears to rodents. Chokecherry is a historically significant species, being utilized in many ways by native peoples. The Blackfoot, for example, ground the entire fruit pit and all to make cakes to be eaten as trail food, and added dried berries to pemmican and fish. Though the fruit is sour, it is still popular today for making jams, jellies, syrup and wine.



A dairy farmer was milking his cow in the M.D. of Wainwright. He was just starting to get a good rhythm going when a bug flew into the barn and started circling his head. Suddenly, the bug flew into the cow's ear.

The farmer didn't think much about it, until the bug squirted out into his bucket. "It went in one ear and out the udder!" he exclaimed.



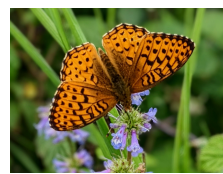
The Canadian Agricultural Partnership represents a Federal - Provincial investment of \$406 million in strategic programs and initiatives for the agricultural sector. Primary producers, farmers and ranchers currently have the opportunity to apply for funding under three programs: Efficient Grain Handling, Farm Technology, and the Water Program. Several M.D. of Wainwright ratepayers have been able to take advantage of this funding, including a recent 50% cost coverage on a \$50,000 grain dryer upgrade. Visit cap.alberta.ca to learn about these programs and how they can benefit your operation.

Some programs require the applicant to have a current Environmental Farm Plan (EFP). These can be completed with the assistance of Assistant Fieldman Shelby Oracheski at no cost to producers. Get in contact today!

SUPPORTING NATIVE POLLINATORS

Pollinators are critically important wildlife that move from plant to plant searching for protein-rich pollen or high-energy nectar to eat. As they go, they are dusted by pollen and move it to the next flower, fertilizing the plant and allowing it to form seeds, berries, fruits, and other plant foods that form the foundation of the food chain for other species—including humans. Bees are the most important pollinators, but over 100,000 invertebrates (including butterflies, moths, wasps, flies, and beetles) and over 1,000 mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, act as pollinators. Some ways in which to support these vital species include:

- Plant a variety of plants that bloom from early spring to late fall. Planting in clumps will help pollinators find plants.
- Choose plants that are native to your region, meaning that they are adapted to local climate, soil, and pollinator species. Including plants that bloom at night will attract bats and moths.
- Reduce or eliminate pesticide use. Choose the least toxic product possible and apply it at night, when bees and many other pollinators are not active.
- Create habitat. Leaving a dead tree or tree limb in your yard provides nesting habitat for bees (make sure dead trees/limbs are not safety hazards for people working below them).
- Provide nectar for hummingbirds. Make nectar by combining four parts water to one part table sugar (do not use honey, artificial sweeteners, or fruit juices). Add something red to the feeder to attract hummingbirds.



The bee is more honored than other animals, not because she labors, but because she labors for others.
-St. John Chrysostom

