

CountryTalk

SPRING 2016

Photo provided by
Salisbury Greenhouse



Salisbury School Gardens Project

In 2013, Rob Sproule, of Salisbury Greenhouse, had a vision for a school garden project in Strathcona County. This year, they are getting ready for their fourth year and are proud to report that the program has grown to include 14 schools in the Elk Island Public and Separate School system.

The Salisbury School Gardens Project builds excitement in students across all grades for growing their own vegetables, flowers and herbs. In the majority of the schools, grade 4 and 5 students are responsible for planting, watering and maintaining the raised garden beds. Often the entire school becomes involved creating an exciting connection between ages and grades. Transportation and Agriculture Services, with the help of Strathcona 4-H Rein Riders, builds and delivers the raised garden beds to the schools.

School gardening engages students by providing a dynamic environment to observe, discover, experiment, nurture and learn. These gardens are a way to integrate urban agriculture lessons within the schools' curriculum.

In many schools, the produce is shared and several of the classes will learn how to cook what was grown. Some schools donate food to the local food bank.

Is your school interested in getting involved? Schools can apply at www.salisburygreenhouse.com

DIY raised planter box

Interested in building your own raised garden bed? Contact Transportation and Agriculture Services to request a copy of the building plans,

Transportation and Agriculture Services
780-417-7100
transportationandagriculture@strathcona.ca

4-H: Building leaders in our community

4-H is a longstanding successful organization that invests in the leadership and development of youth across Canada. Strathcona County is proud to have three active 4-H clubs that work on a variety of projects in our community.

The 4-H program has evolved to include active living, arts, science, technology, crafts, cooking and agriculture. Across Canada, 4-H has over 25,000 members, aged 6 to 25 and aims to be a leader in youth development through the motto "Learn by Doing". The program helps to build community and friendships across all ages by having members learn by using their Head, Heart, Hands and Health - the 4-H's of the members' pledge. 4-H aims to develop skills such as cooperation, leadership, interpersonal relations, critical thinking, decision making, organization, public speaking and community service.

One of Strathcona County's 4-H clubs, the Strathcona 4-H Rein Riders, has been an active group for 27 years, and currently has 29 members. Its members choose their projects from a diverse selection of topics to further develop their skills and interests. The Rein Riders take on projects that include: horse, canine, sheep, judging, construction, small engine, food, sewing, crops and nesting boxes. Livestock and animal projects involve learning and developing skills relating to proper animal care and husbandry, lessons, shows and possibly sales.

This year, the Strathcona 4-H Rein Riders took home the grand prize of \$3,000 in the UFA Growing Up Country 4-H video contest. The video was a testament to the rural lifestyle and what it means to grow up country. The video was created through contributions and efforts of the whole club. Congratulations Strathcona 4-H Rein Riders!

Further to their success and participation in the video contest, the club is also very active throughout the community and participates in volunteer activities, public speaking, camp, regional shows and highway clean-up. The Rein Riders have partnered with Strathcona County Transportation and Agriculture Services to share in the construction of raised garden beds for the Salisbury School Gardens Project.

For more information or to find a 4-H club near you, please visit www.4h.ab.ca



 STRATHCONA
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Growing raspberries

Home-grown raspberries are not only rewarding but given the right location, can be one of the easiest fruits to grow. They require minimal work and by the third year an 8 metre row will supply a family of four plenty of fresh fruit. The following are a few pointers to get you started:

Location selection

- Select a spot that has rich, dark soil with high organic matter.
- Plants will need partial sun exposure.
- Good air flow will help to reduce disease risk, although wind protection is still necessary.

Planting

- Choose good quality, certified, disease-free plants.
- Plant raspberries early in the season.
- Wrap tender roots in moist burlap while preparing the site for planting.
- Water immediately after the plant is in the ground and keep moist until the plants are established.

Growing

- The roots of raspberries are perennial and continue to grow year after year. Raspberries produce fruit on shoots, or suckers that are one year old. Once these shoots have borne fruit, they die. Old shoots can be left standing through winter and removed in the spring. This will help to trap snow, protecting the roots and allowing for better moisture in the spring. Remove and burn shoots after harvest if disease is found.
- Sufficient moisture is a key factor in determining fruit yield. Once the plants start blooming, they will need 2.5 to 3.5 cm of water per week, until the end of harvest, for a good quality fruit yield. Manually controlling weeds around and between raspberry plants helps the plants get the moisture they need.
- Supports can be used to keep the fruit clean and stocks standing.

For further information on growing raspberries, contact your local greenhouse or Alberta Agriculture and Forestry at 310-FARM.

Source: Agri-Facts, Raspberries in Alberta, Agdex 237/20-1, Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development



Jimsonweed



Jimsonweed update

Jimsonweed was found in Strathcona County in 2015. To help manage the spread of this invasive weed, please be on the lookout for this plant. It is commonly found in mixed ornamental garden beds and in fields where canola has been grown (within the last three years).

Jimsonweed is federally classified as a Class 1 weed (prohibited noxious) under the Weed Seeds Order of the Canadian Seeds Act.

Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*), commonly known as Devil’s Trumpet, was found last year in 12 counties across Alberta, including Strathcona County. The Province has determined that this plant came to Alberta in canola seed and ornamental seed packages.

Jimsonweed is a unique-looking plant with dark purple stems, and deep green leaves that have coarsely toothed edges. Flowers are trumpet-shaped and can be white to purple in colour. The prickly seedpod is large and round. It can tower over canola plants so is noticeable in a field when harvesting.



All parts of the Jimsonweed plant are toxic to livestock and people. Jimsonweed and canola seeds are about the same size and color, making them extremely difficult to remove from canola seed.

If you find Jimsonweed in your field, you should remove it immediately and follow these steps:

- Wear gloves and long sleeves when hand pulling
- Double bag the plants and take to the landfill
- Do not compost or burn Jimsonweed as this releases the toxins
- Do not bale canola stubble for feed in fields where Jimsonweed has been found as it is toxic to livestock

To monitor and control the spread of this weed, please contact Strathcona County’s Transportation and Agriculture Services Department at 780-417-7100 if you find it on your property.

Watch out for agricultural equipment

Farmers use a variety of machinery for various agricultural operations. Today’s farmer may have fields in several locations, resulting in having to cross public roads with large machinery.

Being safety minded is the best insurance against risk. According to Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program, 13 percent of farm-related fatalities are traffic related. Typical circumstances include left-turn collisions, rear-end collisions and passing collisions.

Following a farm vehicle usually takes just a few minutes. Don’t let frustration lead you to make a decision that may cause you and others harm.

Defensive driving tips for motorists

- Be alert. Watch for farm vehicles on rural roads, especially at harvest.
- Keep your distance. Stay at least 15 metres or five car lengths back.
- Slow down. As soon as you see a slow-moving vehicle, slow down immediately.
- Be patient. Don’t pass until the road is clear of traffic and it is safe to pass.
- Make sure you’re clear. When passing, make sure you can see the farm vehicle in your rear-view mirror before you change back into the right lane.





County Connect - your online window to service

For a municipality, service to citizens is at the base of almost everything Strathcona County does. This is why we have launched County Connect, an online service request and tracking system.

County Connect offers a new way for citizens to report a problem, request a service, or connect with Strathcona County for information.

This spring, you may need to let us know about a drainage problem or report an animal issue, or maybe rural roadside tree removal, potholes or other road issues. These are just a few examples of the types of service requests found in County Connect.

Using the County Connect web self-service, or the mobile app, citizens can go online to submit a request for service at their convenience – 24/7.

Over 60 services are available on the web self-service, with more to be added. This currently includes a variety of services related to transit, transportation, agriculture, animals and pests, drainage, permits, and tax and assessment. On the mobile app, users can report road issues, sanding requests, crowding on a bus, or a bus not on time.

County Connect provides greater visibility into our service commitment. When submitting a County Connect service request online, by phone or email, users receive a case number to check the status of the request at any time. Users also receive the expected timeline for completion, as well as any necessary updates.

Through open data tracking, the public can also view requests submitted. For example, on March 15, 2016, it reported 255 animals, wildlife and pests tickets closed, and 201 plants, weeds and crops tickets closed since last summer.

We’ve already seen wins in launching County Connect, both internally and externally. It has helped to streamline how requests are handled and reduce duplication.

By using one integrated system for service requests, County Connect ensures a consistent service experience across all departments. The County can better handle service request intake, and job assignment or re-allocation to more efficiently manage the work that goes on behind the scenes to support program and service delivery.

Staff are saying it’s helping them give better information to residents, or to connect citizens to the right person. Requests are being dealt with and closed off more quickly.

County Connect’s robust reporting capabilities are another benefit of the system. Data gathered can help departments assess customer service performance, and support better operational planning and resource allocation. For example, departments now have call volume data that allows for better analysis of what’s happening on the ‘service front’ to more effectively plan and manage customer support. The data will also inform decision-making organizationally in relation to effective, efficient and appropriate service levels.

Ultimately, we want County Connect to enhance the experience a citizen has when connecting with Strathcona County for service and information.

The next time you see a service need that requires Strathcona County’s attention, check out your online window to service – County Connect.

www.strathcona.ca/countyconnect

Axle weights for agricultural use

Let’s work together to protect our roads from damage. Agricultural producers can now apply for a Road Use Agreement (RUA) that will allow 100% axle weights outside of spring road bans on approved routes.

Getting started

- ✓ Call Transportation and Agriculture Services at 780-417-7100 to apply for an annual RUA
- ✓ Include specific route information



February - March
Spring road bans are approaching

- ✓ Call for approval to haul at 100%



March - May
Spring road bans in effect. Weights will be lowered to 90% initially and then again to 75%.

- ✓ Call for approval to haul at 90%



May - February
After spring road bans, weights will increase to 90%. As conditions improve, they will be raised to 100%.

- ✓ Call us in June to verify approval to haul at 100%

Further information

Transportation and Agriculture Services
780-417-7100
www.strathcona.ca/roadbans



See pages 94-102 of the Spring + Summer Camps Guide.

Rural Summer Camps!

Register today for Strathcona County summer camps at the Wilderness Centre and Ardrossan Recreation Complex.

www.strathcona.ca/registration
780-467-2211

STRATHCONA COUNTY



**Spring road bans in effect
March 14 to May 9, 2016.**

Learn more at www.strathcona.ca/roadbans





2016 Rural Roadside Vegetation Control Program

Strathcona County's Agriculture Services annually controls weeds, brush, and trees on rural roadsides and municipal reserves.

Weed control includes plants designated as noxious and prohibited noxious under the *Alberta Weed Act*, and are controlled to prevent spread onto adjacent properties. Brush and trees are controlled to improve sightlines and visibility along roadsides and at intersections, improve drainage, and increase efficiency during snow clearing in winter.

Strathcona County uses an integrated management strategy that involves prevention, identification, monitoring, and controlling undesirable vegetation. Where treatment is required, a variety of mechanical techniques and risk-reduced herbicides are used to ensure a healthy plant community. The program follows industry standards provided by Alberta Environment and Parks as well as the Professional Vegetation Managers Association.

- Weed control for the 2016 season will include:
- All rural roadsides north of Highway 16 (Yellowhead) will be broadcast with herbicide.
 - Rural roadsides south of Highway 16, herbicide will be applied by spot spray application along rural roadsides as necessary.
 - No herbicide will be applied to roadsides where the landowner maintains the grass at lawn height.

Mechanical vegetation control involves mowing rural roadside ditches twice per year and cutting down larger brush and trees by hand.

Further Information
Transportation and Agriculture Services
780-417-7100
www.strathcona.ca/tas

Landowner option program

Rural residents who do not wish to have herbicide applied to the roadside adjacent to their property can sign up for Strathcona County's Landowner Option Program. By enrolling in this program, the resident assumes responsibility of any noxious or prohibited noxious weeds, as well as any brush control requirements. Once signed up, residents do not need to re-enroll in the program.

Contact Transportation and Agriculture Services at 780-417-7100 to sign up.

Upcoming Events in Strathcona County

Farm/Acreage/Community Safety Fair
May 7, 2016 | Ardrossan Recreation Complex

Spring Market
May 14, 2016 | Brookville Hall

Country Classic
May 27-29, 2016 | Josephburg

Make artisan bread in your home seminar
May 28, 2016 | Good Hope Hall

Garage Sale
June 2-4, 2016 | Brookville Hall
June 3-4, 2016 | Good Hope Hall

Boot Sale
June 4, 2016 | Antler Lake Hall

Ardrossan Picnic and Parade
June 18, 2016 | Ardrossan

Canada Day
July 1, 2016 | Sherwood Park

Canada Day Pancake Breakfast
July 1, 2016 | Brookville Hall

Savour Strathcona County
July 10, 2016 | Sherwood Park

Trail Days
August 20, 2016 | South Cooking Lake

Vintage Tractor Pull
August 27-28, 2016 | Bremner



Please join us for **Rural Living Days** on Saturday, June 11 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Strathcona Olympiette Centre. There will be lots of fun family activities, local rural businesses and organizations as well as a food truck!

www.strathcona.ca/agevents

CountryTalk

News for rural residents provided by Strathcona County's Agricultural Service Board



The Agricultural Service Board (ASB) acts as an advisory body to Council on agriculture matters, while promoting and developing agriculture policies and programs to meet the needs of residents and the municipality.

Further information
Agricultural Service Board
Ty Faechner, Chair
Transportation and Agriculture Services
Joel Gould, Manager, Agriculture Services
780-417-7100