

Weeds bug local councillor

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

Although recent hot, dry drought-like conditions are causing major headaches for area farmers whose yields are low and late, the lack of rain also means the weeds – noxious and otherwise – aren't growing, resulting in a substantial drop in the number of weed complaints to the Town.

Last year the Town had 30 complaints about weeds and in all but 12 cases the property owner cut the offending weeds when asked to by the Town. In the remainder of the cases the Town was forced to cut the weeds and bill the property owner. So far this year there have been 18 complaints and all but three property owners in question complied with Town instructions to cut them or the weeds were found to be not noxious or not an infestation.

The Weed Control Act was initially designed for farmers to ensure harmful weeds don't invade their crops and now includes weeds that could cause health problems. The Act includes 23 noxious weeds, but not dandelions, which are a major source of complaint, or purple loosestrife. A recent directive from the chief weed control inspector of the Province indicated that there should be a real proliferation of noxious weeds on a property before a municipality should require that they be cut or sprayed.

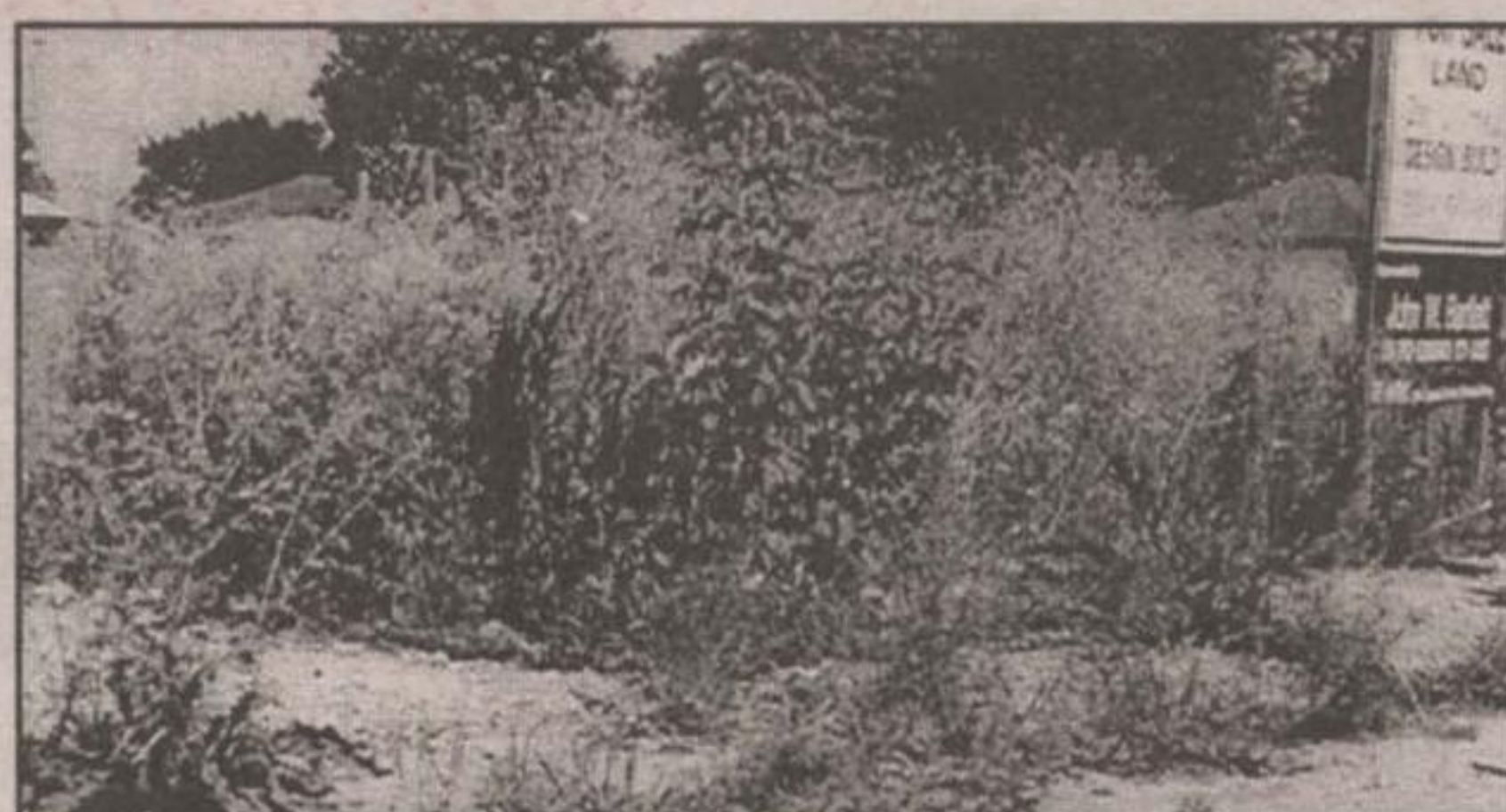
"That's the way that we've always operated in Halton Hills, except for a few things like ragweed or poison ivy that affect people's health," said bylaw enforcement officer Ron Stein. "Any of the other noxious weeds,

we'd have to make sure that there was an infestation, not just the mere fact that there were some of the weeds there before we'd get involved."

If a property owner disputes the findings of the Town's weed inspector then the Region's or even the Province's weed inspectors could get involved.

At Monday night's Council meeting Acton Councillor Rick Bonnette made his "annual request" for staff to investigate the weeds growing at the northeast corner of Queen St. and Acton Blvd.

Bonnette described the vacant property as looking like a tropical rain forest with some weeds a metre-and-a-half high and said the site was "pretty disgusting" and "an eyesore." He wants staff to investigate if any of the weeds are noxious and report back.



WEED WOES: Acton Councillor Rick Bonnette wants Town staff to investigate whether any of the weeds growing on this vacant lot on Queen Street at Acton Boulevard are noxious.



DEVASTATED: Kyle Creasey, above, shows how big his award winning pumpkin was before it was smashed Monday night. Below, the remains of the pumpkin. Creasey was planning on entering it in the Fall Fair Junior Division this year. – Ted Tyler photo

Prize pumpkin smashed by vandals

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"Why Mom?" was the tearful question 12-year-old Kyle Creasey asked his mother Teresa on Tuesday morning after discovering that someone had smashed the huge pumpkin he and his father Cliff were planning to enter in the Acton Fall Fair. His mother had no easy answer.

Sometime overnight on Monday the Giant Atlantic pumpkin, which the Creaseys had lovingly tended since June, was rolled from the community garden on Wallace Street. It was rolled across a field and then smashed on Wallace near McDonald Boulevard. Thieves also stole a smaller pumpkin and all of the tomatoes from the Creasey garden plot.

The pumpkin was between 150 and 200 pounds and at least two-and-a-half feet high and although Cliff Creasey doesn't think that it would have been a contender

for the largest pumpkin entered in the fair – it would have been among the top ones.

"I got that sick feeling when I saw that it was gone," Teresa Creasey said in an interview on Tuesday.

"When my son asked why someone would smash it I really didn't have an answer. I told him that if anyone ever suggested that it might be fun to ruin someone's garden, he would know better."

Cliff Creasey said that the loss of the pumpkin is probably the last straw for him.

"I don't mind if somebody who is hungry takes vegetables from my garden, but to just smash it for fun doesn't make sense. It's kind of a sad scenario but you know I almost expected something like this to happen. This is probably the last year that I'll grow a pumpkin for the fair. I've had enough," Creasey said.

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