

Hot, dry weather affecting crop yields

Continued from pg. 1

He said spider mites take all the moisture out of soybeans and "they can do a 30-acre field in 24 hours." He doesn't think rain will help the soybeans now, but it would get rid of the spider mites and aphids.

Thompson said field corn is in very bad shape and the stalks are turning brown.

"The roots have just run out of moisture," said Thompson. "Corn will cannibalize itself to finish that ear."

He expects the lower yields to impact consumers.

Bob Allison, who grows sweet corn, said the hot, dry weather is "definitely affecting yields."

"Two weeks from now I'm sure we'll be short of corn," said Allison, who usually has corn through the end of September. But he said the corn, while it may be smaller, still tastes good and sweet.

The drought has caused some of his pumpkin plants to abort their pumpkins and he expects this year's crop to be smaller and less plentiful.

The abnormally dry conditions have also wreaked havoc on area lawns, many of which are brown and feel like hay.

While water would solve the problem, Halton Region's watering ban, which was implemented Friday, remains in effect on the weekend.

Both Kevin Moore of Moore Lawn in Norval and Colin Dickinson of Grass Roots Lawn and Garden Service in Georgetown say the brown lawns should come back when we get some rain.

"It goes into a dormant state," said Dickinson. "Your normal blue grass, it looks dead, but it will recover." He added weed grass, which is also mixed in many lawns, will require more rain to come back.

They both said, however, the drought could be disguising problems with insects.

Dickinson said the dry hot weather can make lawns more susceptible to white grubs.

They say lawns shouldn't be cut too short, three inches high at least, and Dickinson said to fertilize and reseed any dead patches in the fall.

Some trees are also showing the effects of not getting enough moisture.

"People are going to great lengths to get their lawns watered but they tend to forget about their trees," said arborist Patrick O'Connor of Cut Right Tree Services Inc.

He said some trees, particularly poplars which require a lot of water, have been dropping their leaves. Like the lawns, he said those trees are going into a dormant stage and they should come back. He said if they don't, it was probably due to something else, like a disease.

The dry weather has meant a busy summer for Vern's Water

Service in Milton which delivers water to homes in Halton Hills.

"We're roughly three times busier than last year," said Kim Pickering.

She said some wells have gone dry and in the summer they usually get calls to rent out one or two water tanks, but this year they have had a lot more calls about the tanks.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

New building will be moved

The future Acton Agricultural Society (AAS) building will be relocated within Prospect Park.

Halton Hills council gave approval to the change in the park's master plan at a recent meeting.

The new AAS building will be built along the lake beside the pavilion in order to share current washrooms, food service areas and meeting rooms. It will also move the building away from the Knox Street homes.

The change was requested by the AAS after a geotechnical study revealed "extraordinary cost implications" in the location selected previously.

The building is expected to be erected sometime in 2002 or 2003, depending on funding.

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