

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



NEWS



JULY 2011

RAGWEED WALKTHROUGH

Why do we worry about ragweed in the Garden? Many gardeners are mildly or seriously allergic to the pollen of *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, common ragweed; it can spoil their pleasure of being in and working in the garden.

A Garden goal is to get rid of as many ragweed plants as possible before they flower. Please pull up any ragweed you find in your own plot(s). Keep an eye out for ragweed growing in public spaces, and pull that up too. Once ragweed has flowered, it will continue to ripen seed even after it is pulled up. Because ragweed seed remains viable for many years, you should throw flowering ragweed in the dumpster – not in the compost.

If you don't know what ragweed looks like, see the photo below, or look at the sample plant near the garden shed.

On **Sunday, July 17**, inspection teams will walk through the Garden to check plots for ragweed. When



Ragweed – *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*

they find plants in a plot, they'll tag one or two samples with red tape. Avoid that red badge of shame, and get rid of the ragweed now!

Teams will also check for plots that seem overtaken by weeds. If yours is one of these, you'll receive an e-mail or a phone call to make sure you are still working your plot. 🍀

UMASS AMHERST STUDY CONFIRMS CLIMATE CHANGE LINK TO LONGER RAGWEED SEASON

A new study by a team of environmental scientists including aerobiologist Christine Rogers of the University of Massachusetts Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences, with collaborators in Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin and elsewhere, this week confirms that ragweed season lasts longer and ends later than it did just 15 years ago, and the changes are linked to climate change.

In particular, they found pollen counts are rising with later first frosts in northern latitudes. The work is published in the current issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Overall, findings are consistent with recent projections by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that enhanced warming is a function of latitude. If similar warming trends accompany long-term climate change, we may expect an impact on public

health via greater exposure times to seasonal allergens, the authors suggest.

Supported by the United States Department of Agriculture, lead author Lewis Ziska, a plant physiologist at the USDA Agricultural Research Service and Global Change Research Unit in Beltsville, Md., and colleagues identified 10 pollen counting stations from Texas to Saskatchewan with at least 15 years of data on local ragweed levels. They then compared pollen data, the number of frost-free days and date of the first frost for each location over the study period from 1995 to 2009.

They found that ragweed pollen in some parts of the northern United States and Canada is now present in the air almost a month



2011 GARDEN CALENDAR

July 17

RAGWEED / WEED WALKTHROUGH

October 16

LAST DAY TO CLEAN UP YOUR GARDEN FOR WINTER

October 22

FALL CLEANUP DAY

GARDEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Third Monday each month @ 6:30 P.M. at the Rec. Dep't.

longer than in 1995. Rogers, a specialist in aerobiology, says that the research likely confirms what people with seasonal allergies already felt was true as they suffered with sneezing and itching longer into the fall. "Now we need to examine the changes in pollen seasons and link them with patterns of allergic symptoms to understand the magnitude and implications of these effects."

A major challenge in studying climate change is finding out how plants are adapting to higher temperatures and other meteorological phenomena, says Edward Knipping of the ARS. "Studies like this also show us that these ecological shifts don't stop at crop production, they can also have a significant impact on public health."

Comparing the beginning of the 15-year study period in 1995 to the end in 2009, researchers found the pollen season lasted from 13 to 27 days longer, and this was strongly correlated with a later first frost. 🍀

— Janet Lathrop, News and Media Relations, UMass Amherst

<http://blogs.umass.edu/lbp/2011/02/25/umass-amherst-study-confirms-climate-change-link-to-longer-ragweed-season/>

DON'T BE A TOOL HOARDER!

Please limit the number of tools you take to your garden so that everyone has access to them! If you are not going to be using a tool in relatively short order, please do not take it to your garden. Though we bought additional tools this year, there are often none of a certain kind of tool available. This happens not because we have too few tools, but because too many tools are with one gardener!

Let's ensure that our fellow gardeners have access to tools, too! If we all follow this principle, then we'll all have the tools we need! 🍀

— Rich Aaronson

MOWER MECHANIC NEEDED

Are you a handy person? Can you help care for the lawn mowers? Are you able to periodically check on them and take them for repair when needed?

If so, please contact Art Larson (ARTLARSON@HORTONTANK-GRAPHICS.COM). 🍀

GUIDELINES FOR HAPPY GARDENING

- ▶ **MOW ON PATHS ONLY** – NOT IN PLOTS
- ▶ **HOLD THE HOSE WHILE YOU WATER; DON'T LAY IT ON THE GROUND AND WALK AWAY**
- ▶ **COIL THE HOSE AFTER YOU'VE FINISHED USING IT**
- ▶ **TURN OFF THE FAUCET** (with the handle) – NOT JUST THE SPLITTER
- ▶ **DON'T HOARD TOOLS**
- ▶ **PRACTICE PARALLEL PARKING** (so all cars can fit)
- ▶ **CATS DO NOT BELONG IN THE GARDEN;** cat manure should never be added to garden compost or left to decompose in vegetable beds; cat feces often carries parasites that can infect humans, and you certainly don't want it near your growing vegetables!

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