

Town warning of invasive plant that can cause burns

By Paula Brown

The Town of Shelburne is warning residents of an invasive plant found in the community which can cause severe burns.

Wild parsnip is a member of the carrot/parsley family and with its tall, yellow bunches and resemblance to common non-toxic plants such as Golden Alexander, it can appear harmless. But it's the plant's nickname ? poison parsnip ? that truly heeds warning.

While the roots of the plant are edible, when in contact with skin the sap can cause severe burns as well as rashes and blisters with exposure to sunlight.

The Town says the plant has been found in open spaces around Shelburne.

Residents are being advised to keep their pet away and to wear protective clothing such as waterproof gloves, long sleeve shirts, pants, and eye wear when in contact with the plant.

If exposed to the sap, symptoms occur 48 hours after exposure. Residents are advised to seek medical attention if a burning sensation or rash appears and if it's exposed to a person's eyes they should be immediately flushed.

In a press release the Town said they've engaged a weed inspector to remove and potentially spray herbicide to control further spread of the plant in the municipality.

Residents are asked to contact Town Hall or the Public Works Coordinator for any sightings.

Characteristics of the plant include yellow flower clusters 10 to 20 cm across, stems are green and 2.5 to 5 cm thick and grow between 0.5 to 1.5 metres in height.