

Ragweed: pull it up!

The territory of the West Island Health and Social Services Centre (HSSC) is among the areas that contain the highest concentration of ragweed and the highest number of allergic children (more than 6,000 children). These findings were revealed in a study carried out in 2006 by the Direction de la santé publique de Montréal. It is now high time to take action.

Ragweed is a very invasive plant that releases pollen in the air from the end of July to mid-October, or until the first frost. This pollen triggers allergic reactions in a great number of residents. In fact, one person out of six in Québec is affected by this plant. In the province, health costs in connection with this allergy that is steadily increasing were estimated at \$157 million in 2005.

According to the study published by the public health directorate, ragweed that grows within a radius of 1,000 metres of a child's home or school significantly increases this child's risk of suffering from allergic symptoms: hay fever, conjunctivitis or an asthma exacerbation.

Control measures

It's quite obvious that ragweed has a direct impact on the health and quality of life, not only of children, but of all those who are allergic as well. Each owner of land, whether private or public, can help improve the population's respiratory health by learning to recognize this weed and by pulling it up or moving it BEFORE it produces flowers.



Ragweed will soon start releasing the pollen that makes it so harmful. To prevent this from happening, we must all play our part.

To find out more on this plant, visit www.herbeapoux.gouv.qc.ca (in French).

Should you have any medical questions on the allergy symptoms triggered by ragweed pollen, contact Info-Santé at 8-1-1.