

# MD of Provost



## Agricultural Roundup

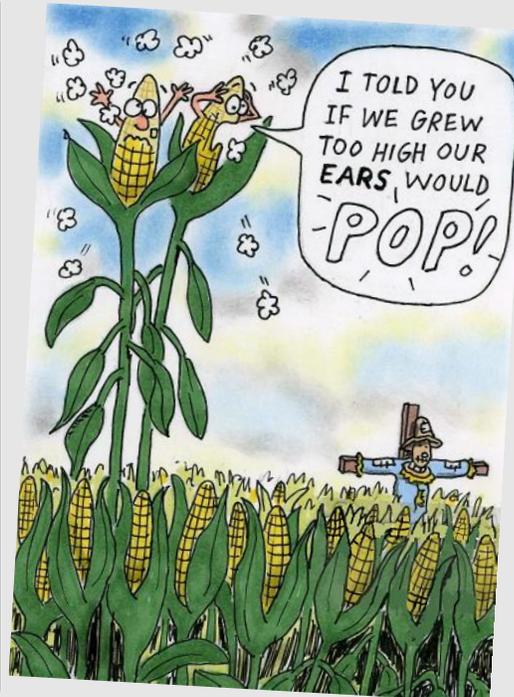


March/April 2021



### Spring Pruning

Most trees and shrubs benefit from spring pruning, but not all of the flowering ones. Early spring bloomers set their flower buds in the fall, and early spring pruning could result in pruning off those buds and losing some, or all, of the blossoms. General rule of thumb is to prune spring flowering trees and shrubs right after they bloom and prune later flowering trees and shrubs in the early spring. When you want to rejuvenate an old tree or shrub and make extensive cuts, it is much easier to prune in early spring when the plant is dormant and you can see shape of the plant.



Spring Pruning

Reminders

Did You Know?

Insect Updates

Strychnine Sales

History of Johnson

Bluebird Trail

Employment

Opportunities

Recipe

Box 300 Provost, AB

ToB 3So

1-780-753-2434

mdprovost.com

**ASB Contact:**

Ag Fieldman: Caitlin Wolf

Cell: 780-753-4359

Office: 780-753-2168

cwolf@mdprovost.ca

**\*\* REMINDERS \*\***

Please submit your no spray zones before May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021!!

Grain bag and twine collection days are the first Wednesday of every month at the Provost Regional Landfill.

Provost Agri-day & Tradeshow  
April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 10:00 am-8:00pm  
Crescent Point Place

Please fill out and submit your dust control form by April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Any late forms will not be accepted.

If you are interested in receiving an electronic version of the newsletter, please email [cwolf@mdprovost.ca](mailto:cwolf@mdprovost.ca)

## Did You Know??

-Alberta Potato Edition.

The province grows around 62,000 acres of potatoes each year.

Potato growers in Alberta generally produce over 1 million tons of potatoes per year, which is equal to 2 billion pounds!

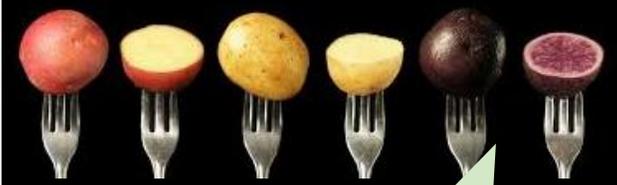
75% of Alberta potatoes are used for French fries and chips. There are a total of five potato processing plants who operate in Southern Alberta; three produce frozen potato products and two produce potato chips.

19% are used for seed. Over 50% of seed produced in Alberta is exported to the US and other Canadian provinces.

6% of potatoes produced are used for the fresh or table market (found in grocery stores or local garden markets). About \$200 million in farm gate sales of potatoes are sold each year.

Alberta potato growers produce, on average, more than 49 different varieties of potatoes each year. Top varieties are: Baby Boomer, Gold Rush, Blazer Russet, HO 2000, Norland, Orchestra, Perline, Russet Burbank, Russet Norkotah, Sangre, Yukon Gold, and speciality smalls.

<https://www.albertapotatoes.ca/home>



## 2% LIQUID STRYCHNINE...

Will be available to purchase at the Provost Shop on Tuesday mornings from April 6<sup>th</sup> to June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. If purchases are required outside of these times, please contact Caitlin to make arrangements.

- 1 bottle per 2.25lbs of grain (approx. 1 ice cream pail). \$11.63 per bottle.
- 24 bottles per case. \$279.00 per case. Use approx. six bottles per 5-gallon pail of grain.

**\*\*Limited supply available\*\***

## MD of Provost Insect Update 2020 Summary From Shelley Barkley

"Last year we had 10 bertha armyworm sites in Provost and all the counts were below the first warning level of 300 moths. Trapping will be very important in 2021 to watch what looks like a possible outbreak this season.

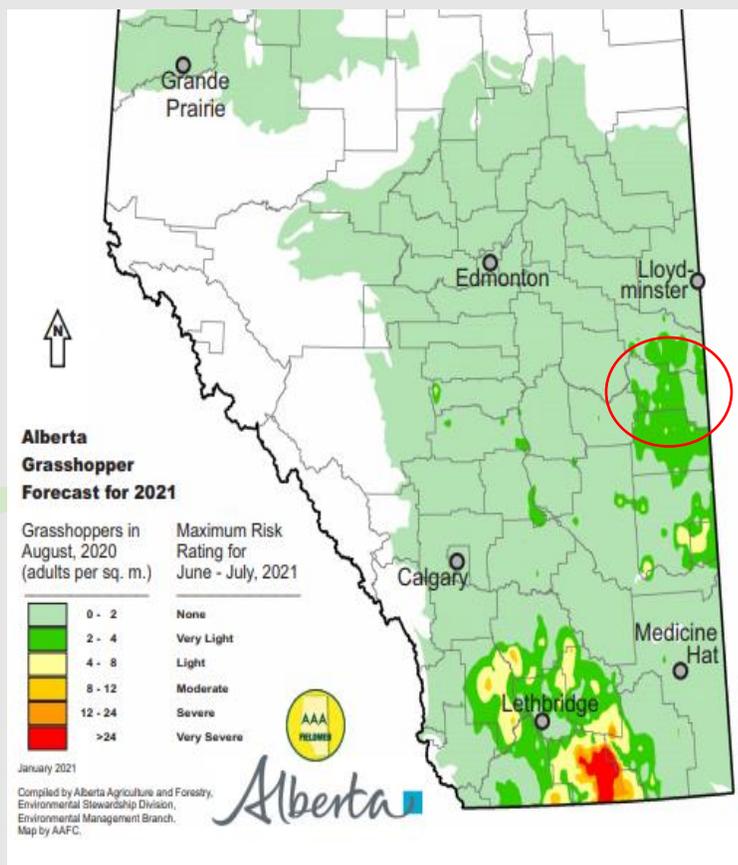
Pea leaf weevil damage was low in all 4 of the fields we checked in your area during our survey in late May – early June. At this point insecticide seed treatment should not be necessary for managing this pest in the M.D. of Provost.

We did find wheat midge in all of the fields we visited. Although not overly high, it would be a good idea for producers and agronomists to monitor fields in 2021 as the wheat heads out. This is especially true if seeding is delayed and/or wet conditions prevail.

No cabbage seedpod weevil were found in your area. The population in central Alberta seems to have reduced and the range expansion has contracted.

There was one diamondback moth trap site in the MD which did not catch many moths.

We did 3 stops in the MD of Provost looking for the canola flower midge. One location had 2 buds that were damaged. For this survey we evaluate 100 racemes for damage, so 2 buds is not of concern."





## Peaks to Valleys and Back

History of Mountain Bluebirds  
around M.D. of Provost

Write up and photos submitted  
by Lois Johnson



The undulating flight of the Mountain Bluebird (MOBL) as it moves from fencepost to fencepost foretells the peaks and valleys of its life in the Provost M.D.

Carol Berg recalled seeing LOTS of Mountain Bluebirds in Birdsvew School yard in the early '40's. Olea Paulgaard once implied, "There used to be lots of bluebirds around when I was walking to school as a child. Now we don't see any." Coffee shop "talk" confirmed Olea's comments. Doubts of our knowledge of MOBL's abounded.

But in 1969, Roger Johnson found a pair south-west of Cadogan. He was determined to take up the call, "Bring Back the Bluebird" which echoed through the prairie. By next spring we had 13 houses waiting on fence posts, and by fall the bluebirds rewarded us with 27 young. Our journey to bring back and retain the population of the Mountain Bluebird to East-Central Alberta had begun!

Short grass prairie with scattered groves of aspen are most appealing to bluebirds. As we expanded our trail, farmers and land owners generously shared their pasture-land fenceposts with the birds. Our lives brimmed with daily summer outings watching nature unfold. Bluebirds would approach our stationary vehicle or sit on the nearest wire when we checked the babies, having full confidence in our ability.

It was an opportunity to share flora and fauna with not only our young children, but school classes, Guides, Scouts and 4-H members. Adults, up to Seniors' groups and the elderly benefited from our new knowledge. Trips with residents in the local Handivan brought back childhood memories of meadowlark, prairie rose and even some brome-grass! A very young fawn curled in grass by the roadside was not disturbed while a bus-load of grade four students looked down on it.

Each year we expanded our trail and the population of bluebirds grew. Favourable weather, adequate housing and an abundance of food saw our population of birds (116 in 1971 ) skyrocket to 1,181 birds in 1989! This was our highest peak in bird population.

The following years saw a slight decline, but we were still positive. Then cool, rainy days in May and June of 1992, a reduced grasshopper population, and only a few second nests by the birds had us concerned. Mouse population spiked throughout the region (to 26% of houses by year end) and Hanta virus became an issue. I was left to tend the bluebird trail alone. This deep valley was the low point of my years on the Johnson Bluebird Trail.

Fortunately family, friends and community volunteered to help me get back on track. Wonderful efforts by many people, within and surrounding the MD of Provost gave their time, talents and money to help on this journey. Volunteer helpers to monitor the houses, offers to build new houses, "secretaries" to record information on each and every nest box, and maintenance crews pushed forward to help me climb out of this valley. Lifelong friendships developed as a result of much of this support.

Bird population had recovered considerably since that time, and then came 2008! An April blizzard and deep snow cover, followed by a solid week of cold weather left behind hundreds of dead male MOBL's who had arrived earlier to claim prime nesting sites. Starvation and hypothermia the cause. Females were also diminished, but not to the extent of the males. Did the females arrive later, or had they more fat protection than the males? However, an interesting development occurred. While "shooting a flare" at an oil well site, fire erupted in the nearby large grove of trees. Fire departments from several areas responded and extinguished the flames. I suspect the partially burned trees and underbrush exposed hibernating spiders, beetles or grubs and this provided food for my remaining bluebird survivors. The seven females in that area mated with the one or two males. Including my entire trail, end of the year showed 78 birds fledged while a normal year would have 700-800 fledglings. Interesting how one disaster came to the rescue of the second.

Now as I start into the 53rd year of my journey with the MOBL's, friends and associates often comment about seeing a bluebird on my trail or in the vicinity. I realize the significance of continued human intervention to maintain these endearing bird's survival. The birds have faced many challenges, many are ones over which we have no control; others we can help. Weather patterns are unpredictable; changes in our land and land use are evolving. There will be valleys to overcome, but by local interest and involvement in the birds' welfare they can also reach some exhilarating peaks and "KEEP the Bluebirds" in Alberta.

## SEASONAL EQUIPMENT OPERATORS & LABOURERS

The M.D. of Provost No. 52 is currently seeking seasonal equipment operators and labourers for the 2021 season. These positions will be based out of but not limited to the M.D. shops located in Hughenden and/or Provost.

Valid Driver's License Required (Class 1Q Endorsement preferred).

Experience in operating various heavy equipment, the ability to work without supervision, and mechanical ability are required.

### For more information contact:

Tyler Lawrason @ 780-753-2434

([tlawrason@mdprovost.ca](mailto:tlawrason@mdprovost.ca))

Len Fossen @ 780-753-4423

([lfossen@mdprovost.ca](mailto:lfossen@mdprovost.ca))

Marty Biro @ 306-873-7831

([mbiro@mdprovost.ca](mailto:mbiro@mdprovost.ca))

Interested applicants are invited to **submit a resume with a current driver's abstract to one of the above or to the following:**

M.D. of Provost No. 52  
4504 – 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Box 300  
Provost, Alberta  
T0B 3S0

These positions will be left open until suitable candidates are found.

This position falls under the collective agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 955.

We thank all applicants for their interest. However, only those applicants receiving an interview will be contacted.

## ASB SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The M.D. of Provost No. 52 Agricultural Service Board is currently seeking applicants for temporary positions to carry out the 2021 Weed Control Program.

The successful applicants will be working out of the Hughenden M.D. Shop and the Provost M.D. Shop. Duties will include operation of the spray trucks, consultation with ratepayers, weed inspection, some reclamation and record keeping.

A pesticide applicator's license would be an asset but not a requirement.

### For more information, please contact:

Caitlin Wolf,  
Agricultural Fieldman  
Cell: 780-753-4359  
or  
M.D. of Provost No. 52  
Office: 780-753-2168

Send resumes to:  
M.D. of Provost No. 52  
Box 300  
Provost, Alberta  
T0B 3S0

Email: Ag Fieldmen  
Caitlin Wolf  
([cwife@mdprovost.ca](mailto:cwolf@mdprovost.ca))

## SKILLET PEROGY SHEPHERD'S PIE

### Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp EACH dried thyme and sage
- 2 cups frozen diced mixed vegetables, thawed slightly
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp EACH salt and pepper
- 24 frozen potato and cheese perogies
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- Sour cream and thinly sliced green onion (optional)

### Directions:

1. In a large deep oven-safe nonstick skillet, heat oil over med-high heat. Cook beef, onion, garlic, thyme and sage until beef is no longer pink. Stir in mixed vegetables to coat.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together broth, flour, salt and pepper until smooth. Pour into skillet and stir to coat. Bring to a simmer, stirring. Place perogies onto beef mixture in concentric circle over top. Cover skillet with lid and simmer gently for about 12 minutes or until perogies are tender and puffed. Uncover and sprinkle cheese over perogies.
3. Place skillet about 6 inches under preheated broiler for about 4 minutes until cheese is melted and top is light golden. Let cool slightly before serving dolloped with sour cream and green onions, if desired.

Recipe from <https://thinkbeef.ca/skillet-perogy-shepherds-pie/>.

