

## Weed Control Test Plot - Wild Parsnip

**Gilles Quesnel and Mike Cowbrough**

Many parts of the province are noticing an increase in wild parsnip populations. Traditionally prevalent along roadsides, this weed is beginning to creep into agricultural fields. This weed, the wild type of cultivated parsnip, contains higher concentrations of a chemical called furanocoumarins, a defence mechanism against predators. Unfortunately for humans, exposure to this chemical, which can vary greatly between plant populations, causes phytophotodermatitis that results in redness and blistering of the skin. Wild parsnip is easiest to spot in July, when its bright yellow flowers are extremely visible. Some have noted that upon first glance wild parsnip resembles a dill plant, both of which are from the same family, but have dramatically different leaf structures. Field trials have been conducted to identify herbicide solutions that could be used to manage wild parsnip, while leaving competing vegetation around field borders to survive. An experimental product, called “Truvist” which is currently going through the regulatory process, has been one of the few herbicides to provide adequate control of wild parsnip.



**Above:** An untreated area bordering a field on July 21st, 2012



**Above:** An area that had been treated with the experimental herbicide “Truvist”.