

City Council Approves New “Mandatory and Voluntary” Brazilian Pepper Removal Zones

Kathy Carik | 08/09/2010 11:35 am

With continued community support, the City of Sanibel is moving forward with the implementation of the Brazilian Pepper Eradication Program. Please read this article for zone information and to view photographs of Brazilian pepper.

On July 20, 2010, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 10-007, which designates Zone 5 as a “mandatory” Brazilian pepper removal zone. It requires that all property owners within Zone 5, which includes all properties west of the centerline of Tarpon Bay Road and east of the centerline of Rabbit Road (see map), remove the invasive exotic plant Brazilian pepper from their property within 90 days of the adoption of the Ordinance. After the 90 day period (October 20, 2010), the City will begin Code Enforcement actions to ensure the removal of Brazilian pepper from zone 5 properties.

In order to successfully control Brazilian pepper, all Brazilian pepper tree stumps **MUST** be treated with an appropriate herbicide. In most cases, a product containing the active ingredient triclopyr (e.g. Ortho “Brush-B-Gone, Garlon 4) is the best choice for controlling Brazilian pepper; however, the method of application may vary depending on the maturity of the pepper being treated. Mature trees should be cut as close to the ground as possible. Within 5 minutes, herbicide should be applied to the cambium (living tissue just inside the bark). This is known as “cut stump” application. In some cases, mature trees that are not visible from adjacent properties, roadways, or other structures may be treated by “basal bark” application (killing the tree in place). Small seedlings and re-sprouts may be treated with either basal bark or foliar treatments. **However, due to the highly invasive nature of this plant, even when treated properly some Brazilian pepper is likely to re-sprout and new seedlings may appear.** Properties should be inspected and retreated for any new seedlings or re-sprouts within 3 months of the initial treatment and every 6 months thereafter. If this is not done, more extensive and expensive pepper removal work can be expected.

In addition, City Council has also designated Zone 6, which includes all properties west of the centerline of Rabbit Road to and including all properties on Jamaica Drive (see map), as a “voluntary” removal zone. During the voluntary phase, property owners that are not otherwise obligated to remove their pepper due to City Ordinance (i.e. as a condition of a Development Permit) are eligible to receive a 20% reimbursement for the cost of removing their pepper. To take advantage of the City’s 20% reimbursement program, Zone 6 property owners must complete and sign the Brazilian Pepper Removal Agreement and submit it to the Natural Resources Department with a copy of their paid invoice. Funding is limited and reimbursements are distributed on a first come, first serve basis. The reimbursement program for Zone 6 will last for approximately one year from July 20, 2010. Zone 6 property owners may also take advantage of city-scheduled curbside pick-ups where pepper debris can be left curbside unbundled and will be picked up by the City’s horticultural waste management contractor (dates TBA).

Information including the “Brazilian Pepper Removal Agreement”, the City information sheet “Brazilian Pepper Removal: 5 Things Every Property Owner Should Know” and the “Brazilian Pepper Removal Contractor List” can be accessed via the City’s website at <http://mysanibel.com/Departments/Natural-Resources/Vegetation-Information/Exotic-Vegetation/Brazilian-Pepper-Eradication-Program> . For additional information, contact Holly Downing, Natural Resources, 472-3700.