



"Gee, I'm sure I parked my truck in here somewhere!" Well, the weed problem in Levelland, Tex., wasn't quite that bad. But it was bad enough for the city to initiate a clean-up campaign.

Levelland, Tex., Goes City-Wide Against Weeds

WE DON'T like weeds!" That's the message from Levelland, Tex., this summer — but what's really making news in this west Texas community is that officials are doing something about it.

When it comes to making their town look more attractive, the people of Levelland show a pretty keen eye. They've launched a campaign to "clean - up, fix - up, and paint-up" that in recent months has helped them win awards and growing recognition of their achievements in making the community a better place to live and work. The West Texas Chamber of Commerce, for example, has named Levelland a "Blue Ribbon City" this year. And the town is in competition for several national awards.

After this year's high rainfall, weeds started coming up a lot higher and heavier than usual. When they started popping through sidewalks and streets, around traffic lights, street signs, and fire hydrants, local leaders decided it was time to sound an alarm.

June Was "The" Month

A weed clean-up campaign was spearheaded by Levelland's Mayor, Bob Vaughn, who declared the month of June "TLC" month. "This meant 'Think, Look and Compare'," explained Mayor Vaughn. "Our focus is thinking, looking, and comparing toward improving the appearance of the community and weed control is an important part of this idea."

The Chamber of Commerce has



City Manager Bob Sokoll (left) and Chamber of Commerce Manager Jake Street examine weed growth on the municipal court.

been particularly successful in encouraging local support and participation in the clean-up program. Through its meetings and broad distribution of special literature, newsletters, and bulletins, the Chamber has reminded the community of the need for a concentrated effort to control weeds.

Chamber members emphasized that weeds not only detract from beautification, but also they attract insects and rodents or can become serious safety or fire hazards if not properly checked. The Chamber also initiated a number of special awards programs to reward outstanding local efforts in civic beautification and clean-up.

The cooperation of a local businessman was especially helpful when it came to handling the unusually widespread weed infestations. Agricultural dealer Lon Ward of Farmer Fertilizers helped by putting together special information material on herbicides telling where, how, and when to use them. This was sent to all Levelland businessmen and community leaders.

As Ward put it, "We saw no reason why our town people shouldn't benefit from using modern chemicals for weed control, too — just like our farmers do. The benefits work both ways: saves time, labor, and expense, and gets the job done."

To help this idea along, Ward gave away dozens of sample packages of the herbicide Pramitol. Each package contained one pound of Pramitol — enough to cover a 100 square foot area. "A single applica-

tion is usually sufficient to knock down most existing weeds and then prevents them from coming back for some time," Ward says.

According to Jake Street, manager of Levelland's Chamber of Commerce, Ward's example is typical of the kind of support and help he's been getting from business leaders. "This is the real reason our clean-up and beautification program has been so successful to date," Street reports.

Bob Sokoll, city manager, backs this up. "Support has been first rate in many areas and we've seen considerable improvement in a relatively short time," Sokoll says. "More than 30 old buildings have been torn down or replaced and 10 more are on the way down. Other businesses have remodeled or modernized their exteriors and improved their surrounding property.

"At last count more than 100 vacant lots had weeds shredded, grass cut, and debris removed," Sokoll reports. "City-owned rights-of-way and alleys were spruced up, along with more than 100 acres around our municipal airport. And we've removed more than 100 junk car bodies from residential areas."

Santa Fe Railroad and Phillips Petroleum — both with sizable real estate in Levelland — are tying in their own beautification and clean-up activities with the community efforts.

Weed Control Will Increase

Both Street and Sokoll agree that weed control as such has been neglected in previous maintenance programs and both see an increased effort to exterminate them in key trouble spots.

Streets and other paved areas where weeds have penetrated in downtown Levelland, for example, will be treated regularly with herbicides like Pramitol. Application is also planned around fences and guard railings and various installations at Levelland's new municipal airport.

"We also recommend herbicides to control weeds around cotton gins, elevators, storage buildings, lumber yards, parking and drive-in movie lots, and along exposed pipelines," Street adds.

"All in all, beautification is a noticeable fact in Levelland — and everyone likes the improvement!"

Fence rows that once looked like the one on the left were cleaned up with Geigy's Pramitol to look like those on the right.

