

OPINION: Time for New Bedford to ban another New Bedford “tumbleweed,” the nip bottle

The one-use shopping bag is not the only piece of plastic that is kicking around everywhere. Once a week I mow my lawn and before I do that I have to patrol the yard to remove a dozen or more nip bottles that have been tossed out of passing cars or by pedestrians.

Wherever I go within the city these New Bedford tumbleweeds are on sidewalks, near drain gutters – pretty much everywhere. Sure, these “nip” bottles are taking up company with other New Bedford tumbleweeds like one-use plastic bags, water bottles, styrofoam Dunkin’ Donuts cups, cigarette butts, plastic straws and other refuse but these plastic bottles are dense and when run over or...hit with a lawnmower they turn into sharp plastic shards. Not exactly good for your tires or some child playing.

What is it about these nips that people can’t put them in their pocket or a plastic bag in their car to be tossed out when they get home or to wherever it is they are going? Are garbage barrels a rarity where they are going? Are they underage drinkers who somehow got ahold of the nips and don’t want the evidence on them when they get home?

Whatever the reason, we humans already have a massive carbon footprint and the environment and animals are taking a pounding. We can’t even control our output of garbage, refuse, litter, and other pollutants – we really don’t need another.



While Massachusetts is considering a 5-cent deposit to – in theory – crackdown on people throwing them all over the place the legislature typically stalls, dies and is forgotten about. Regardless, a nickel won't be much of a deterrent considering it's not really a deterrent to the water and soda cans and bottles kicking about on sides of the road.

Maine has the problem too and so they tossed about the idea of banning them, but ultimately settled on a 50-cent price hike and a 5-cent deposit. Chelsea here in Massachusetts has simply outright banned them.

These nips are so ubiquitous throughout the state that a resident of Salem created a Facebook page called "Fireballs of Salem" named after what seems to be the most popular selling nip "Fireball."

Will adding a deposit or price increase help cut down on the littering? Marginal at best in my opinion. There are two solutions: force manufacturer to use a bio-degradable bottling product or ban them outright.