



T&amp;G Staff/RICK CINCLAIR

Workers from Shaw Environmental, working for the EPA, remove contaminated soil from a yard Wednesday.

## Trees, bushes fall to Templeton cleanup

By Shirley Barnes  
CORRESPONDENT

**TEMPLETON** — Lawns on the end of Winchester and Harris streets and a few on Bridge Street are without grass, trees, shrubs or flowers, but are filled with sand, loam and earth-moving equipment during phase 1 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's residential cleanup of polychlorinated biphenyls.

The yards in the area were sampled for evidence of PCBs in 2003 after testing indicated that some of the cancer-causing chemicals might have migrated from an old landfill on the former Temple Stuart factory property.

Workers have begun the cleanup on the first 10 house sites of the 28 destined to be excavated, before the ground freezes in mid-December. The workers removed 20 to 30 trees and shrubs. These trees and shrubs will be replaced in the spring when they have a better chance to live, according to Michael S. Barry, coordinator for the EPA's New England Region

1. The yards where contaminated soil was removed will be filled with sand to a 6-inch depth, then loamed and hydro-seeded. Not all of the lawns will receive loam this fall because the grass seed would not take, and the lawn could turn into mud during the winter. Those yards that are not loamed and seeded by mid-October will be covered with a special mat on top of the sand for the winter, Mr. Barry said.

Some delay was caused by a search for acceptable material to fill the yards. The crew works on two yards at a time. The sand is procured locally, but loam is coming from Billerica.

Mr. Barry said vegetables grown in the area are safe because plants do not generally take up PCBs.

The yards were divided into 30-by-30-foot grids for testing, and soil in any grid above 10 parts per million was removed. In areas where there were children's swings and play areas, all soil was removed to be totally safe, he said.

Marie T. Monopoli of Harris Street was in her yard watching the work. "I moved here from Worcester a year and a half ago and I love the town because it is so peaceful and pleasant," she said.

Ms. Monopoli said she finds it quiet despite the traffic that has been detoured by her home because the Bridge Street bridge has been closed. She lost four large, healthy trees from her yard because of the testing.

Her only objection was that the healthy trees had to go, but two dying trees on the Harris Street side of her home that drop branches frequently were not in a contaminated area and will probably have to be taken down by the town for safety.

"I didn't plant any gardens on my lawn because I knew this was coming after I moved here."

"The people working on the project are really good to work with. I like the way they listen to people and handle complaints," she said.

She said she works a lot with

Mike Blodgett of Shaw Environmental, the company working on the project, and Mr. Barry of the EPA has also kept a good connection with the neighborhood.

Kevin Swartz said his father always raised a garden and also brought in vegetables from an uncle's farm stand for neighbors. This year his father was not able to do as much with his garden, but the only spot on their property that did not need to be excavated was that old garden plot.

"They told us that because over all these years we carefully rototilled the garden, the PCBs were dispersed from that area," he said.

Mr. Barry said he hopes to have phases 1 and 2, each with 28 homes, completed by the middle of next year. Some work will start at homes on Elm Street within a few weeks. Some areas across Elm Street and possibly beyond might be done depending on the results of sampling in drainage swales and pipes under the railroad tracks.