

A WEED’S BLOG



Pend Oreille County Noxious Weed Board

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Weeds and Wildlife: A Hunter’s Hidden Challenge

Hunters cherish the thrill of the chase and the connection to nature. However, noxious weeds are a hidden threat in the landscape that can significantly affect wildlife populations and hunting experiences. Understanding their impact not only helps protect the ecosystems that hunters value but also enhances hunting opportunities.

HOW NOXIOUS WEEDS AFFECT WILDLIFE

Noxious weeds disrupt the delicate balance of ecosystems that support the wildlife pursued by hunters. These invasive species often outcompete native plants, leading to a decline in the natural food sources and habitat available for game animals. For instance, species like absinth wormwood or Japanese knotweed can rapidly take over areas, choking out beneficial vegetation that deer, elk, and other wildlife rely on for nourishment and shelter. The lack of forage forces animals to search elsewhere for food and affects hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities. As food sources dwindle, so does the health and population of these animals, making hunting increasingly difficult.



Cow elk in a patch of thistle

THE ROLE OF PACK ANIMALS IN HUNTING

Many hunters rely on pack animals, such as horses, mules, and goats, to access remote hunting areas. These animals provide the necessary strength and stamina to carry gear and navigate challenging terrain, allowing hunters to cover more ground and reach less frequented locations. However, the hay and feed used for these pack animals can inadvertently introduce noxious weeds into pristine environments. Seeds from invasive plants can easily spread through hay and be deposited in new locations when pack animals graze or travel. This not only impacts the health of the land but also affects the wildlife that depend on healthy ecosystems for survival. Understanding this connection is vital for hunters who want to protect their hunting grounds and ensure sustainable wildlife populations.



Pack horses on a mountainside

The Washington State Department of Agriculture's (WSDA) Weed-Free Hay and Mulch (WWHAM) program plays a vital role in preventing the introduction of invasive plants into wilderness areas. WWHAM certification ensures that hay, straw, and other products have been inspected for noxious weeds. You can find a list of certified growers by visiting the WSDA website.

<https://agr.wa.gov/services/licenses-permits-and-certificates/plant-permits-and-certification-programs/wwham>

For inquiries, contact the WSDA Plant Services Program at (360) 902-1874 or via email at PlantServices@agr.wa.gov

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THE IMPORTANCE OF NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT

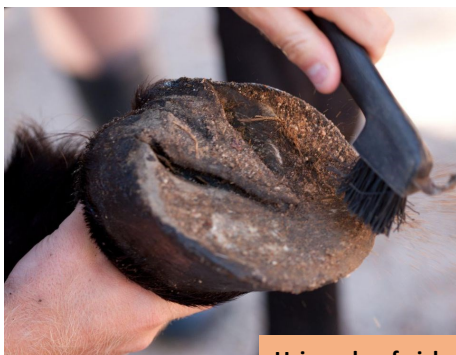
Managing noxious weeds is essential for maintaining the health of hunting grounds and wildlife populations. Effective weed management involves several key components:

Awareness and Education: It is crucial to understand which weeds are classified as noxious in the area. Common offenders like common St. John's wort and spotted knapweed should be on every hunter's radar.

Properly Cleaning Your Equipment: After hiking or riding, it's important to thoroughly clean gear and equipment, including hiking boots and pack animal hooves to remove any weed seeds or plant material that could spread invasive species to new locations.

Participating in Local Initiatives: Engaging with local noxious weed boards and participating in removal efforts is important. Attending workshops can deepen one's understanding of weeds while fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among fellow participants.

Reporting Infestations: If noxious weeds are encountered while in the field, reporting them to the local noxious weed board is vital. Early detection is key in managing these invasive species.



Using a hoof pick

GET INVOLVED!

Passionate hunters have the power to make a significant impact on the health of ecosystems. By managing noxious weeds, the wildlife thrives, hunting experiences remain rewarding, and natural landscapes are preserved for future generations. Joining the fight against noxious weeds is essential. Together, with collective effort, hunting environments can be enhanced, and the beloved wildlife can be protected.

All About Poinsettias

Poinsettias are the most popular potted plant during the holiday season and the bestselling plant in the U.S. and Canada. There are over 100 varieties, with colors ranging from red to pink, white, yellow, purple, and salmon. They are native to Mexico and Central America, the ancient Aztecs used poinsettias to make red dye and used the sap to control fevers. Despite

the myth that they are toxic, poinsettias are not poisonous, the misconception began in 1919 when a child allegedly died after eating a leaf. This was never proven and was later determined to be hearsay. A study at Ohio State University found that a 50-pound child would have to eat over 500 leaves to experience any harm. However, they do produce a milky sap that can cause irritation for those with latex allergies or pets. The red "flowers" are actually modified leaves called bracts, with the small greenish-yellow flowers in the center. Poinsettias need indirect sunlight for 6 hours a day and should be kept in temperatures between 60°F and 70°F during the day and 55°F at night. Water when the soil feels dry, but ensure the pot drains properly to avoid root rot. After the holidays, you can try to get your poinsettia to bloom again by reducing watering and keeping it in a cool, dark place until the next season. To trigger blooming, place the plant in darkness from 5 pm to 8 am starting in October. Once spring arrives, trim the plant to encourage new growth, and you can move it outside once the risk of frost passes.



December 12th is National Poinsettia Day!

Poinsettias ooze a milky latex-based sap that may cause mild irritation and nausea in pets if eaten.

For more information: <https://extension.illinois.edu/houseplans/poinsettia>

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Weed Management Takes Flight

As the challenge of managing noxious weeds continues to grow, innovative strategies are emerging to enhance control efforts. One of the most promising advancements in weed management is the use of drones. These unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are revolutionizing the way land managers monitor and combat invasive plant species.

BENEFITS:

Drones equipped with high-resolution cameras and multispectral sensors can cover large areas quickly and efficiently. They provide real-time data on plant health, enabling land managers to identify and map infestations of noxious weeds more effectively than traditional ground surveys. Drones can be utilized for targeted herbi-



Drone applying herbicide

cide application, minimizing the use of chemicals and reducing the environmental impact. This precision application allows for treating only the areas affected by invasive species, thus preserving surrounding native vegetation. By reducing the need for labor-intensive ground surveys and large equipment, drones can lower operational costs associated with weed management. Their ability to quickly gather data also saves time, allowing for rapid response to emerging weed threats. Drones can easily navigate challenging landscapes, such as steep hills or dense forests, where it might be difficult for personnel or equipment to operate safely. This capability ensures that even remote areas are monitored and treated effectively. The data collected by drones can be analyzed to track the spread of noxious weeds over time, assess the effectiveness of control measures, and inform future management strategies. This data-driven approach allows for adaptive management practices that can respond to changing conditions and emerging threats.

LIMITATIONS:

Current drone technology that limits spray tank size and battery life makes spraying large areas time-consuming. Regulatory restrictions can complicate operations, as many regions require special licenses and adherence to strict safety guidelines. The use of drones requires skilled operators with a strong understanding of both the technology and application technique. As with other types of applications, weather conditions can significantly impact drone operation and herbicide effectiveness. While drones can reduce some costs, the initial investment including purchase, software, and maintenance can be hefty.

Quick Facts About Rush Skeletonweed

Rush skeletonweed (RSW), *Chondrilla juncea*, is a class B noxious weed in Washington state and a mandatory control weed in Pend Oreille County.

- Rush skeletonweed is native to parts of Western Europe, North Africa, and Central Asia, it was accidentally introduced as a seed contaminant.
- Rush skeletonweed is a perennial ranging in size from 1-5 feet tall, with a long slender taproot that can grow up to 7 feet deep.
- Plants begin as a basal rosette of leaves (dandelion-like) then grow 1 to 6 branching stems.
- Plants exude a latex sap.
- Rush skeletonweed is a threat to irrigated lands and rangelands.



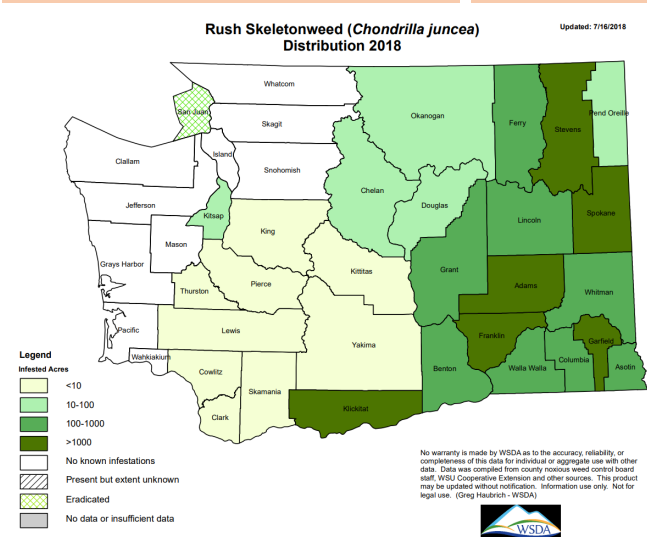
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- Flowers are 1/2 inch in diameter and are yellow in color.
- Stem bases have coarse, downward-pointing brown hairs.
- Stems are highly branches and have few leaves.
- Inhabits disturbed areas and prefers well drained, coarse soils.
- Each mature plant produces 1,500 to 20,000 seeds!
- Can reproduce by shooting buds on root and root fragments.
- Control Methods

- ◇ Using both plant competition and biological control agents often results in better control than either method used separately.
- ◇ Hand-pulling can work for small infestations.
- ◇ Areas must be controlled 2 to 3 times per year for 6 to 10 years to remove seedlings and re-sprouting roots
- ◇ Mowing repeatedly may reduce plants' biomass and seed production but may not provide eradication
- ◇ The lack of foliage makes herbicide applications somewhat trickyPOC-NWB uses Highnoon herbicide mixed with Broncmax water conditioner and Syl-Tac-EA surfactant



Did You Know?

Four biological control agents have been released for control of RSW in North America: a gall mite, a gall midge, a rust, and a root-feeding moth. All except the moth are used in Washington state.

Labeling Your Spray Equipment

It is vital to label your spray equipment (backpacks, ATV sprayers) with the herbicide you're using to avoid misapplication. Come visit us at the Pend Oreille County Weed Board office to pick up water proof labels that can be attached to your equipment, helping you steer clear of any confusion. We offer both customizable blank labels for you to write on and pre-printed labels for commonly used herbicides.

CBCG	
Ounces per gallon of water	
	0.3125 oz BroncMax
	0.0138 oz Escort
	0.00781 oz Climb
	0.6563 oz Lardon 22K
	1.781 oz 2,4-D Wossler 64
	0.1563 oz Syltac EA
	0.5 Highlight

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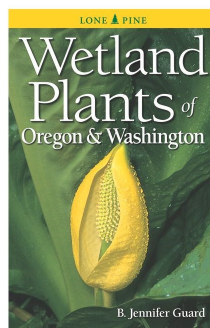


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Holiday Gift Ideas for the Weed Warrior

The holiday season is a great time to show appreciation for the gardeners, farmers, and landowners in your life. If you're looking for the perfect gift that combines practicality with thoughtfulness, consider herbicide-related gifts that can help them maintain healthy, weed-free landscapes. Here are some ideas:

1. **Personal Protective Equipment:** Chemical resistant gloves made from materials like nitrile or neoprene. Gardening gloves for weed pulling. Safety goggles or glasses for herbicide mixing. Rubber boots with slip-resistant soles, that can be easily rinsed after application.
2. **Spray Equipment:** A high-quality herbicide sprayer can make a world of a difference. Consider gifting a backpack sprayer, or handheld sprayer (the battery-operated ones are pretty handy!). A graduated measuring pitcher would be a great addition.
3. **Weed Control Tools:** Practical tools for weed management such as hoe cultivators, weeding forks, garden trowels, and hula hoes can be perfect stocking stuffers. Consider large trash bags for proper weed disposal.
4. **Soil Test Kit and Fertilizer:** Understanding soil health is key to effective weed control. A soil test kit can help assess pH levels and nutrient content, allowing them to make informed decisions about herbicide use. Fertilizer is a great gift option for a wide range of people!
5. **Water Test Kit:** Hard water has detrimental effects to herbicide efficacy. A water test kit can help them understand their water content and choose the right spray adjuvants.
6. **Plant Identification Books/Guides:** There are many options to choose from: weeds, native plants, aquatic plants, rare plants, medicinal plants, botanical terminology, and even trees. Come visit the Weed Board Office to see some of our free options!
7. **Subscription to Gardening/Outdoor Themed Magazines:** A subscription to a gardening, agricultural, or outdoors magazine can provide ongoing education and inspiration. Look for publications that fit the person you are shopping for.



As the holiday season approaches, thoughtful gifts focused on herbicide application and weed management can make a significant impact. Whether it's essential equipment, protective gear, or educational resources, these gifts show your support for a safer and more effective approach to maintaining healthy landscapes.

Local Store Options:

- Ace Hardware
- Albeni Falls Building Supply
- Tractor Supply
- Newport Public Library
- North 40
- Home Depot

Online Store Options:

- Gemplers
- Amazon
- Agrisupply
- Forestry Suppliers
- Walmart
- Lowes