

Help prevent noxious weeds

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The majority of us probably have to deal with weeds at one time or another.

In the garden, in the farm, on the sidewalks, name a place and there is a chance there is a weed.

If we take a closer look, we will find that all weeds are not the same, among them there is a special group called "noxious weeds."

Plants in this group are alien plants capable of causing great harm by invading and modifying diverse environments such as agricultural lands, recreation and wildlife areas.

Some noxious weeds are of particular concern because they can be poisonous or injurious to people, domestic animals and wildlife. In addition, areas infested with noxious weeds can suffer significant economic losses due to loss of production.

Oregon is not exempt to the threat of invasive noxious weeds. That is why the Oregon Department of Agriculture is in charge of providing leadership and coordination of the control efforts through the Noxious Weed Control Program.

The budget assigned to this program provides funds for numerous activities including early detection and rapid response programs, biological control, education, mapping, inventory, assistance for implementing integrated weed control programs, etc.

Noxious weeds in Oregon are designated as "A" or "B." Weeds in the "A" group either have a small distribution that makes their eradication possible, or since they are present in surrounding states can potentially become a problem for the state. Some of the species in this group include common reed, giant hogweed, kudzu, Iberian starthistle and plumeless thistle.

In the "B" group you will find more abundant species, particularly in some counties - for instance field bindweed, medusahead, saltcedar, diffuse, Russian and spotted knapweeds, bull, Canada, musk and Scotch thistles, just to name a few.

The complete list of noxious weeds for Oregon can be found at www.oregon.gov.

There are several things we can do to fight noxious weeds. The first step is to be aware of the presence of noxious weeds, because often the spread of these species goes unnoticed.

Pay particular attention to frequently disturbed areas (burned fields for example) and sections with high traffic either by humans, livestock or wildlife. Some of these species may have attractive characteristics like colorful flowers, which lead to the second step, prevent the spread of these weeds into new areas.

Noxious weeds are frequently moved by machinery, vehicles, contaminated hay or innocently brought into your garden. Actively participate in the control efforts; consider the possibility of eradicating plants growing isolated or in small patches. When facing larger infestations, contact your local county weed control office.

The importance and magnitude of the task of preventing the spread and controlling noxious weeds in Oregon requires the support and involvement of all individuals and it is our duty if we want to preserve the natural beauties of the place we call our home.

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