



# The Sage

NEWS FROM THE FRANKLIN COUNTY  
NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

SPRING 2020

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Board Meetings are open to the public and held on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7 pm from March– September.
- Visit our website at [fcweedboard.com](http://fcweedboard.com) to learn about noxious weeds and our activities.
- FC Weed Board offers a cost share program to target specific noxious weeds.
- Drop by Sacajawea State Park and view the pollinator garden.

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## When Trees Behave Badly

Trees can be weeds, too.

Three stubborn exotic tree species in particular are very difficult to get rid of once they become established: **Russian olive, saltcedar and tree of heaven.**

All three types of trees spread by both seed and root. They are confoundingly persistent plants. Chop them down and they'll send up new suckers from their roots. Spray them with herbicides — they may look dead for a bit... but often grow right back.

You may lose some battles along the way, but with persistence and the right combination of mechanical and chemical treatments, you ultimately can win the war. Here are some guidelines.

### Russian olive and saltcedar

State-listed as a Class C Noxious Weed, Russian olive is a deciduous, thorny tree that spreads along waterways and has become naturalized along rivers of the western United States. Saltcedar, or tamarisk, invades similar habitats and is also widespread. It is a Class B Noxious Weed in Franklin County.



Russian olive

Small, young trees can be controlled with a **foliar application** of herbicides such as triclopyr or imazapyr, preferably from late summer to fall. Repeat applications are often required.



Saltcedar

**Basal bark treatments** of triclopyr and oil can be applied as long as the ground is not frozen. Thoroughly spray the lower trunk all the way around to a height of 12 to 15 inches from the ground. Repeat applications may be necessary.

It is sometimes possible to manually remove seedlings and saplings, including roots, before the plants mature. Plants can grow back from root fragments, however.

Large, well-established Russian olives and saltcedar will require **cut-stump treatments**. Cut down the tree with a chainsaw and immediately spray the stump with herbicide, according to the product label. Only attempt if trained how to safely do so and only if wearing appropriate personal protective equipment. Suckers typically emerge soon after cutting, but the herbicide should help suppress most regrowth.

Larger, severe infestations will be extremely labor-intensive and will require heavy machinery.

Once removed, it is important to replant streambanks with desirable plants, such as willows and cottonwoods, to prevent erosion.

Story continued on Page 2

*When Trees Behave Badly, continued from Page 1*

## Tree of Heaven

Similar to Russian olive and saltcedar, **foliar herbicide applications** of triclopyr or imazapyr, preferably in late summer to fall, can control small, young infestations of tree of heaven. Cutting or mowing tree of heaven is ineffective.

For trees with trunks up to 6 inches in diameter, **basal bark applications** of triclopyr in oil are effective in controlling tree of heaven.

Unlike Russian olive or saltcedar, the cut-stump method is **not** effective on tree of heaven because it triggers regrowth from the roots. Instead, for tree of heaven with trunks greater than 6 inches in diameter, use the **frill method**, also called “hack and squirt.” Apply a concentrated herbicide solution into evenly spaced frill cuts around the trunk, leaving living tissue between the cuts to allow herbicide to travel down to the roots.

Well-established stands will require a combination of these methods beginning with a foliar herbicide application to reduce small, low growth first. Initial treatments often only reduce root systems of tree of heaven, so know that repeated applications and continued monitoring of the site will probably be necessary.

Download our Tree of Heaven brochure and other materials from our website at [fcweedboard.com/publications](http://fcweedboard.com/publications).



Tree of Heaven



Frill Method

These control options are meant as a guide and do not reflect the complete list of options, herbicides or combinations available, nor do they endorse specific products. The FCNWCB is not liable for applications of herbicides that do not follow the label. The label is the law and the FCNWCB will not be held liable for any misapplications.

Sources include Written Findings of the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board; *Weed Control in Natural Areas of the Western United States*, UC Davis; *Field Guide for Managing Saltcedar*, USDA Forest Service; Penn State University Extension; Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Association.

## Do your part to keep weed seeds from spreading

We've heard it before: “Prevention is the most effective method of dealing with weeds.” One aspect of prevention is to limit seed dispersal. **So what can you do?** At work or at play think about how your activities move seed. Put to use the following tips to help prevent seed dispersal:

- ◆ Avoid mowing noxious weeds such as yellow starthistle. Mature plants break away catching in mower decks and harvesters, depositing seed everywhere the equipment goes.
- ◆ Apply pre-emerge products in spring or fall to coincide with seasonal moisture and to target your specific weed species. Puncturevine typically germinates in June so get your pre-emergent out March to early April.
- ◆ Cover loads while transporting.
- ◆ Remove flowerheads to prevent plants from going to seed. This practice is a short-term fix and will have to be repeated several times throughout the growing season.
- ◆ Clean equipment and gear before leaving the work site or after recreating.

Seeds spread through similar pathways whether from movement of goods, vehicles or animals. Anything contaminated with weed seeds can start a new infestation.



## The Most Wanted (Dead) List

The Washington State Noxious Weed Board recently released the 2020 Noxious Weed List, which has only two changes from the previous year. The state added South American spongeplant as a Class A Noxious Weed and bumped up the status of lesser celandine from a Class B to a Class B-Designate.

So what does that mean? Well, neither species is known to occur in Franklin County, but if a Class A were detected here, we would be required to manage it with the goal of eradication. A Class B-Designate would have to be controlled.

Each year, the state weed board directs county weed boards to control certain high priority species, while allowing individual counties to determine the management status of other weeds according to their local priorities.

So how does a weed such as South American spongeplant or lesser celandine make the weed list?

It's a public process that consists of the following steps over the course of a year.

- ◆ **January 1 to April 30:** Proposed list additions, changes or deletions are submitted to the State Weed Board.
- ◆ **May:** State Noxious Weed Committee considers proposed changes.
- ◆ **June to August:** Research and field investigations are conducted by the committee.
- ◆ **September:** Committee reviews the results, votes on recommended changes and prepares a technical report for the State Weed Board. The Board votes on proposals to be included at a public hearing.
- ◆ **November:** At the public hearing, the State Weed Board makes a final decision on changes to the weed list and distributes the new list to county weed boards.
- ◆ **Finally,** each county weed board then has 90 days to adopt the state's changes and approve its own county noxious weed list.

Speaking of that, the [2020 Franklin County Noxious Weed List](#) is now available online as a printable brochure, which includes Our Weeds of Focus (the ones we're working the most on). If you have not explored our website at [fweedboard.com](http://fweedboard.com) we encourage you to do so. While you're there, you can check out the [noxious weed identification pages](#) and [Options for Control brochures](#). There is also a wealth of other [educational information](#) available in print, digital and video formats.

### Weed List Changes for 2020



**Colombian  
Spongeplant**

**Added as Class A:** Perennial herb, typically free floating, may also grow rooted in mud. Spongy, honeycomb-like tissue on undersides of leaves aids in flotation. Dense mats of vegetation accumulate clogging pumps, dams and gates, as well as recreational access.

**Named Class B-Designate:** Emerges before most other spring plants giving it a competitive advantage over native understory plants. Grows in a variety of sites including moist areas, roadsides and landscapes.



**Lesser Celandine**

## Success Story: Smith Canyon's toadflax is toast

After a decade of persistence, the Franklin County Noxious Weed Control Board and its partners have nearly eradicated a Dalmatian toadflax infestation on a mix of U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and BLM lands in Smith Canyon northeast of Pasco.

Years ago the lands were severely infested, as the 2010 photo below shows. Last fall, however, the FCNWCB spray crew found only a few plants scattered over hundreds of acres. Repeated annual herbicide applications eventually got the infestation under control, and these days it's a challenge to find any toadflax in the area.

Originally from Eurasia, Dalmatian toadflax is a Class B-Designate Noxious Weed in Franklin County. At one time, the showy perennial was common in floral arrangements and distributed in "wildflower" seed mixes. It escaped cultivation and now infests rangelands and other open spaces throughout the western United States.



2010



2019

## Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*) under quarantine

Ornamental grasses are popular landscape plants for several reasons. Larger grasses such as Giant Reed are considered by many to be living fences, providing privacy quickly. Although homeowners may find this appealing, its rapid growth and large size also create problems: Growing to 20 feet tall or more, it overtakes space meant for other landscape plants and can cause structural damage.

Perhaps the biggest threat Giant Reed poses in the Tri-Cities is its high water consumption. In arid regions water is a critical resource for agriculture and municipal users. Any plant outcompeting crops or with the ability to restrict water flow is harmful. It also has high biomass for much of the year increasing chances for fire. This is not a plant you would want up against the house.

Giant Reed is on the state quarantine list which means its sale, transport or distribution is prohibited into or within Washington. We have a few instances of the plant in landscapes locally, most likely planted prior to inclusion on the list, which we monitor regularly. Those homeowners have also been advised of its status.

If you suspect Giant Reed is in your yard or think you have spotted some we would like to know. Our staff encourages its removal and wants homeowners to know dividing and sharing these plants with neighbors violates the quarantine law.



Tall 20' bamboo like canes



Giant Reed is very flammable

## Pop Quiz... *Name that spring rosette*

Spring is here and noxious weeds are beginning to rear their ugly heads. Can you identify these lil' rascals?

Answers are on the back page.



Taproot biennial or short-lived perennial.

Leaves grayish green, alternate, hairy.

Leaves divided into lobes on both sides of the vein.

Taproot perennial.

Rosettes resemble a dandelion.

Lobed basal leaves point back toward leaf base.



Taproot biennial.

Basal leaves start small but grow 2 feet long and a foot wide.

Hairy leaf surface causes a grayish green appearance.

## Announcements

- ◆ Good luck to our friend and local ally in weed control Vic Reeve who is retiring this spring. Vic started with the Franklin County Weed Board in 2004 and was program coordinator from 2011 to 2015. He has been Benton County's coordinator since 2015. We look forward to working with his successor, Konrad Kauer, and the rest of the great staff at Benton County. Best wishes, Vic!
- ◆ Need a sprayer this spring? Rent one of our UTV or ATV mountable sprayers — free with a damage deposit. Call the office for details at 545-3847.
- ◆ Visit our booth at the [Regional Home & Garden Show](#) Feb. 21-23. We'll have educational materials available and a chance to win some cool gardening tools.



## Sage Words From The Program Coordinator

Did you know the FCWCB is funded through an assessment paid by FC property owners? Have you ever wondered just how those resources are used? We make an all-out effort to provide a program that offers technical assistance, education and a presence in the community.

Our activities keep us busy all year; there is never a shortage of things to do. Winter is earmarked for continuing education to keep pesticide licenses current and upgrading equipment to make our operation more efficient. In early spring we begin roadside work with a residual application on 1,900 shoulder miles. After completion of the residual task we work on contractual obligations with public agencies including noxious weed control on BPA rights of way, the Columbia Plateau Trail and in the Juniper Dunes recreation area. You will also find us at local events handing out informational materials in spring and summer. Even in the hottest summer months we survey for noxious weeds and contact landowners to establish reasonable weed control plans.

In the spring and fall we coordinate large scale aerial applications targeting priority species. Over the last two years we have managed to treat nearly 8,000 rangeland acres, made possible through a cost share program we began in 2018. We anticipate spraying an additional 3,395 acres this year under the program.

Certain noxious weeds are targeted in the fall as we advise or assist landowners in rush skeletonweed, Dalmatian toadflax or Scotch thistle control. If time permits we return to the state parks to conduct additional weed control activities there or to spruce up the pollinator garden at Sacajawea State Park. All of our activities are done to protect FC's agriculture and preserve its open spaces.

—Todd Harris, FCNWCB Program Coordinator

### Page 5 Spring Rosette I.D. Quiz Answers

1. Diffuse knapweed, Class B Noxious Weed, control or containment required.
2. Rush skeletonweed, Class B Noxious Weed, control or containment required.
3. Scotch thistle, Class B Noxious Weed, control or containment required.



### Franklin County Noxious Weed Control Board

Physical: 502 Boeing St., Pasco WA ~ Mailing: 1016 N 4th, Pasco WA 99301

509-545-3847 ~ [fcwb@co.franklin.wa.us](mailto:fcwb@co.franklin.wa.us)

[fcweedboard.com](http://fcweedboard.com)