

Franklin County Noxious
Weed Control Board

The FCWB educates property owners on identification, impacts and control methods for state-listed noxious weeds and helps out with the identification and control options of the occasional nuisance weed. It is also our job to locate noxious weed infestations that are not being effectively controlled. To achieve this, the program conducts annual surveys and follow-up checks on existing noxious weed locations.

Program staff provides the landowner with information on how to identify and control noxious weeds on their property. If requested, we will meet with the owner or property manager to review the weed locations and discuss site-specific noxious weed control plans.

For more information, contact the FCWB at 509-545-3847 or fcwb@co.franklin.wa.us.

FRANKLIN COUNTY
NOXIOUS WEED
CONTROL BOARD

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

www.fcweedboard.com



SCOURING RUSH
EQUISETUM SSP.

Options for Control



PHYSICAL: 502 BOEING ST.
MAILING: 1016 N 4TH
PASCO, WA 99301
509-545-3847
fcwb@co.franklin.wa.us
www.fcweedboard.com

Scouring Rush

Scouring rush (*Equisetum hyemale*) is a nuisance plant invading landscaping, yards, irrigated ditches, and irrigated farmland in Franklin County. Scouring rush belongs to one of the oldest plant families, Equisetaceae, which is over 100 million years old. Equisetaceae are vascular plants which reproduce by spores, not seeds.

Scouring rush is a perennial plant which has vertical jointed reed-like stalks of medium to dark green. The hollow stems are up to 3 feet (0.91 m) in height. The tiny leaves are joined together around the stem, forming a narrow black-green band or sheath at each joint. Like other ferns and their relatives, the plant reproduces by spores.

The stems are generally deciduous in cold climates, and remain during winter in warmer climates. It forms dense spreading colonies, in full to partial sun. The plant spreads very aggressively by underground runners, reaching under/past pavements and garden walls.

Root barriers or large sunken planters ease containment in the garden. Scouring Rush prefer wet sandy soils, though some are semi-aquatic and can withstand periodic flooding. The stalks arise from rhizomes that are deep underground and almost impossible to dig out. Scouring rushes can be nuisance weeds, readily regrowing from the rhizome after being pulled out.

The hollow stems are coated with abrasive silicates, making them useful for scouring (cleaning) metal



items such as cooking pots or drinking mugs. In Japan field horsetail (*E. hyemale*) is still boiled and then dried to be used for final polishing on wood to produce a smoother finish than any sandpaper.

If eaten over a long period of time some species can be poisonous to grazing animals, including horses.

Control Options

Scouring Rush is so invasive and difficult to control that it is very important to prevent it from becoming established.

Lasting control of horsetails is difficult to achieve because of the high level of food reserves stored in the rhizome. Prevent spread and establishment of horsetails by using only clean soil in your landscape and by checking nursery stock for unwanted plants.

Horsetail stems are without functional leaves, so they don't tolerate much shading. Densely plant areas with horsetail to shade them out and reduce spore germination. Use of landscape fabric can help horsetail from getting established in an area because germinating spores can't grow through the fabric. Covering an infested area with fabric can help suppress re-growth but, because of their aggressive rhizomes, they often run to the edge of the fabric and emerge there. Layers of bark mulch, sawdust, or other plant material will not control horsetail.

For established patches, efforts should be directed at depleting the food reserves in the rhizomes. Complete removal of the tops about 2 weeks after each emergence for 3 to 4 years has provided effective control. Tilling can make the problem worse by spreading the rhizomes into new areas. In a study in Quebec, Canada, horsetail was removed by hoeing 16 times, but had no impact on re-growth. Removal of fertile stems as soon as they appear will help to reduce spread by spores. In order to deplete

rhizomes, manual or mechanical control should be done as soon after emergence as possible.

Because of its hard, waxy cuticle, high silica content, and aggressive rhizomes, horsetail is very difficult to control with herbicides. Herbicide applications are most effective when plants are 6 inches tall or less. It is best to use a surfactant along with the herbicide for best results.

For the Homeowner: Spot treatment applications with glyphosate can be used, though one should expect that re-treatment will be necessary. Glyphosate, however, reduces or removes competitive plants which reduces scouring rush infestations.

For Farm Application: Herbicides containing the active ingredient halosulfuron-methyl (Sedgehammer, Sandea, etc.), chlorsulfuron (Telar), dichlobenil (Casaron) and MCPA are effective in the control or suppression of Scouring rush. These products are best suited for large areas, agricultural and industrial uses and are not readily available for homeowner use.

READ AND FOLLOW ALL PESTICIDE LABEL DIRECTIONS AND RESTRICTIONS. BE SURE THAT PRODUCT USE IS COMPATIBLE WITH YOUR GOALS.

