



The Sage

E-NEWS FROM THE FRANKLIN COUNTY
NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

FALL 2019

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Board Meetings are open to the public and held on the 3rd Monday of each month at 1 pm from October-February
- Visit our website at 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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Choosing the best control method

As fall seasonal moisture arrives, so does the opportunity for noxious weed control, particularly for perennials. Understanding a weed's life cycle and the extent of an infestation can guide you in managing the problem and help you decide if mechanical or chemical control is appropriate.



Can ya dig it?

In some situations, a mechanical control such as digging or pulling can be effective typically on small infestations of less than a dozen plants. Mechanical controls on larger infestations can be counterproductive because they tend to disturb the soil promoting additional seedling germination. Let's take a look at some specific weeds and possible control options.

Scotch thistle is a biennial you can dig up as a rosette in its first year of growth or early in its second year before it produces seed. It has a woody taproot so step on a good-sized shovel blade to get it under the entire root then pop it out of the ground.

Puncturevine is an annual you can attack late spring to early summer before it starts producing seeds. It's easiest as a two person operation: Wearing gloves, gather up the sprawling vines and hold them up and together in a bunch. Then your partner digs under the entire taproot and pops it out of the ground. If possible, sweep up any of the spiny seeds you might find. Bag and discard the entire plant and seeds in the trash.

Other small infestations that can be dug up include bull or musk thistle, houndstongue rosettes, kochia rosettes, Ravenna grass (preferably while young), and diffuse or spotted knapweed (by hand pulling).

Mechanical control is not recommended for perennial weeds that spread by creeping roots. Digging or mowing triggers a growth response



Time to spray

Story continued on Page 2



Control Methods, continued from Page 1



at the crown or new plants may grow from root fragments. Focus on depleting the plant's reserves with a pre-emergent herbicide such as an aminopyralid. Target perennials like rush skeletonweed in the fall.

Yellow starthistle, an annual, and Scotch thistle can be controlled with pre-emergent herbicides applied in spring or fall. Pre-emergent herbicides need moisture for activation so for the best results time your application with seasonal precipitation.

If you miss the window for pre-emergent, 2, 4-D, a contact herbicide, can be applied in late spring or summer to prevent seed production in the current season. Just remember to continue to work on the seed bank that remains.

Over time, a consistent effort will reduce or eliminate an infestation on your property. If you need help with weed identification and developing a management plan, our staff is available for consultation.



Watch out for this potentially invasive creeper



FCNWCB field inspectors have spotted this herbaceous perennial in some residential landscaping around town a few times recently. While Myrtle spurge may be a hardy ground cover as a garden planting, it is toxic and can act invasive.

Native to the Mediterranean region, it was introduced to the U.S. as an ornamental, but has escaped cultivation and is listed by the state of Washington as a Class B-Designate Noxious Weed. It can be an aggressive invader of fields, rangelands, gardens, roadsides and other areas where it crowds out native plant species.

It is toxic if ingested causing nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Skin contact with its milky sap can cause redness, swelling and blisters.

Small infestations can be dug or pulled (wear eye protection, gloves and long sleeves). It will take several attempts over multiple years to achieve success.

Most herbicides such as 2, 4-D or glyphosate will work to control it. In the fall, use a residual herbicide such as dicamba. Only apply herbicides where it is legal and appropriate to do so. Read and follow the herbicide label directions.



What's that weed? You can find it online at fcweedboard.com



Puncturevine



Scotch thistle



Camelthorn



Diffuse knapweed

FCNWCB staff just finished a round of updates to our [Weed I.D. pages](#) on our website, as well as our Options for Control brochures.

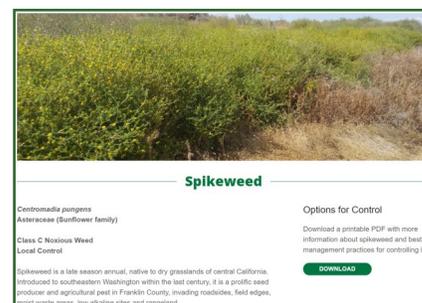
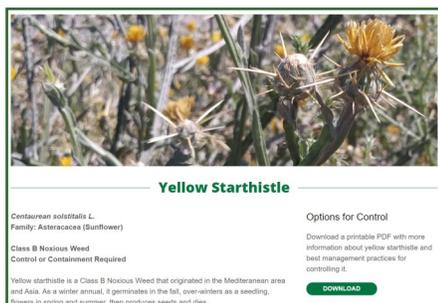
These 10 updates are for noxious weed species that are of particular interest here in Franklin County. If you're reading this newsletter online, click on the underlined hyperlinks below to go directly to the new web page for that species. Some invasive species such as [diffuse knapweed](#) and [puncturevine](#) are well established and a considerable nuisance in some areas of our county. Other weed pages we've updated such as [camelthorn](#) and [spikeweed](#) are extremely rare species in our county and we want to keep them that way. You can help by learning what camelthorn and spikeweed look like – then if you see either in our county **please report it to us**.

The first step in weed control is to identify a plant by species. Then you can choose the most effective control measures for that species which are also appropriate for your situation and goals.

The updates feature lots of photos taken by FCNWB staff, and on each weed page you can download a printable brochure with tips on chemical, mechanical, biological, cultural and preventive controls.

There's other good stuff to learn. For example, did you know...

- ◆ ... [Ravenna grass](#) was once a popular ornamental grass planted by landscapers? It's now escaped cultivation and a threat to the environment and a neighborhood nuisance. That's why we're working to eradicate it.
- ◆ ... one [Scotch thistle](#) plant can produce 40,000 seeds, each viable for up to 40+ years? That's why pre-emergent herbicides are useful – to suppress seedling germination.
- ◆ ... [Dalmatian toadflax](#), [houndstongue](#), [kochia](#) and [yellow starthistle](#) are poisonous or injurious to animals? If consumed in large quantities each can be fatal.



Washington state law requires landowners to manage noxious weeds on their properties in an effort to protect agriculture, the environment and each other as good neighbors. Providing information via our website and weed brochures is one way FCNWCB is here to help. So if you're curious about noxious weeds, please [go online](#) and check them out. Printouts of our Options for Control brochures are also available by request and staff are here to help in person by phone or email with weed identification and more.

Native landscapes, not all brown sand and sage

We occasionally receive inquiries from homeowners who want an easily maintained, colorful landscape but don't want to spend lots of time working in the yard or provide additional moisture during the hot, summer months. If you are one of those people you may want to consider planting natives as they are adapted to our local conditions. Most put down a long taproot so once established they survive without any supplemental watering. In fact, you might be surprised to learn that our area is not all brown sand and sage; many desert plants have beautiful flowers providing season long interest when interspersed among sagebrush and rabbitbrush.

Blue flax and Oregon sunshine are brilliant in the spring followed by globemallow, all blooming for a long period of time. Penstemons are the jewels of the desert. There are many different varieties that can be used to extend flowering and color in your garden.



Blue flax



Oregon Sunshine



Barrett's Penstemon



Firecracker Penstemon



Palmer Penstemon



Native plants are rooted for success

Look around now and you will see the cheery blooms of fall aster. Blanket flower and goldenrod are blooming in our pollinator garden at Sacajawea State Park which was installed last October. In the ground for a full year now the plants are established and thriving. You should make a point to visit soon before the plants go dormant. You never know, you may be inspired to add natives to your landscape.



Fall Aster

Need a sprayer? Borrow one of ours.

New this year: Weed sprayers are now available on loan from the Franklin County Noxious Weed Control Board.

Easily strapped onto your ATV or UTV, the portable sprayers can handle most small acreage weed-control projects. Each is equipped for broadcast applications or spot spraying.

During the fall season, these sprayers would be ideal for applying a pre-emergent control to a pasture or other non-crop area.

This service is available to Franklin County residents at no charge with a damage deposit. Call the weed board office to find out more or to make a reservation.



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Pop Quiz... *Name that thistle!*

Answers on back page



Taproot biennial

Coarse, deeply lobed leaves

Grows a stalk 3 to 7 feet tall with multiple branches and flowerheads

Rhizomatous (creeping) perennial

Dense, clonal growth

Flowerheads, many, in clusters at tips of branched stems



Taproot biennial

Large gray-green cottony leaves and winged stems

Can grow more than 8 feet tall

Announcements

- ◆ FCNWCB welcomes Dan Voss to the Board of Directors. Dan will serve as District One Director, replacing Bill Middleton who served for 20 years. A huge thank you to Bill for his years of service.
- ◆ 2,081 rangeland acres were approved for the 2019 cost share program. 2020 Cost Share sign-up begins Dec. 3, 2019. Contact the office for details.
- ◆ FC will accept **Owner Will Maintain** agreements through Dec. 31, 2019 from property owners who do not want to participate in the Roadside Vegetation Management program.
- ◆ Congrats to Charisse, winner of the garden bucket. She visited our booth at the fair and entered the drawing for a chance to win these cool tools.



Sage Words From The Program Coordinator

After spending the year chasing weeds and possibly feeling like you have been overrun with them, it's time to clean up. If you are mowing, please clean off your mower deck before moving from one place to another.

While weeds that are mowed are far less unsightly than overgrown weeds, the seeds that are often shattered out in the mowing process often land on the mower deck. I can't stress enough how important it is to clean equipment before you move from place to place.

In most cases, weed seeds are very small. In fact, many weed seeds don't require much wind at all to move them from place to place. From late summer to early fall most weeds have reached the end of their growth and development so you can expect that as you are mowing those dried-up weeds you are also doing a fine job of spreading weed seed all in the same pass.

You can minimize the spread of weed seed by cleaning off the mower deck before leaving the site. The use of an air compressor or pressure washer can greatly reduce the chances of spreading weeds beyond your property.

—Todd Harris, FCNWCB Program Coordinator

Page 5 Thistle Quiz Answers

1. **Bull thistle, Class B Noxious Weed, control or containment required.**
2. **Canada thistle, Class C Noxious Weed, control level determined locally.**
3. **Scotch thistle, Class B Noxious Weed, control or containment required.**



Bull thistle flower

Visit our website at fcweedboard.com