



A bimonthly publication from the Ada County Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement Department

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Treating Spring Rosettes Key to Controlling Noxious Weeds

A great time to control the spread of noxious weeds is during the rosette stage in early spring. Weeds at this stage are the most susceptible to chemical control. The following photos show three of Ada County's most common noxious weeds in their rosette stage.



Hoary Cress (Whitetop)

Whitetop is a deep rooted creeping perennial mustard plant that can grow up to 2 feet tall. Leaves are blue-green in color and each plant produces multiple tiny white flowers with four petals each. Whitetop is a very aggressive plant that if left untreated can eventually eliminate desirable vegetation. It can be controlled most effectively with foliar herbicides applied during the rosette stage. For best results these herbicides should be applied in early spring to actively growing rosettes or to regrowth before the bud stage or in the fall before frost.



Poison Hemlock

Poison Hemlock is a biennial plant that grows up to 12 feet tall. This is the most toxic of Idaho's 64 listed noxious weeds. All parts of this plant are poisonous to livestock and humans. This plant is easy to distinguish as its stems have distinctive purple striping and it hosts large clumps of white flowers. The leaves are fern-like and pinnately divided. This plant should not be mistaken for wild parsley. Chemical treatments on rosettes in early spring have proven to be very effective in controlling Poison Hemlock.



Scotch Thistle

Scotch Thistle is a serious problem in Ada County. It is an erect biennial that grows up to 8 feet tall. It has spiny leaves and spiny winged stems covered in woolly gray hairs. This weed is a prolific seed producer. The rosette, if left untreated, will easily be wider across than can be reached with both arms. By this time the plant will build a big fleshy taproot and go into senescence. The next year the bottom leaves go flat and it will bolt and grow eight to ten feet tall. Spraying a giant, second year plant is somewhat ineffective. It is best to spray the rosette in the spring, even through October, with a broad-leaf herbicide.



Meet Our New Mosquito Division Coordinator

- Alex Aaker -

WPM has hired a new Mosquito Division Coordinator. Alex Aaker started working on Dec. 31, 2012. She attended St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN where she graduated in May 2009 majoring in Environmental Studies. She is currently taking online classes through Pennsylvania State University to earn a GIS Certificate.

Alex served as an Americorps intern with the Student Conservation Association after college. She also held internships with several government agencies in a variety of locations including the National Park Service in Alaska, the BLM in Southern California, the Fish and Wildlife Service at National Wildlife Refuges nationwide, and the National Forest Service in the Salmon-Challis National Forest in Idaho. Her work varied tremendously and included, among other things, providing visitor services, building and maintaining trails, restoring desert areas damaged by ATV use, and using GIS/GPS to map trails on wildlife refuges. Alex most recently lived and worked in the Salmon-Challis National Forest as a project leader for twenty Americorps interns.

Alex enjoys her job here at WPM because it gives her the opportunity to learn about mosquitoes and study the best ways to control them. She appreciates the diversity of the job duties and looks forward to working with the crew here to continue to learn about and improve abatement practices. She is happy to offer a service to Ada County that makes it easier and safer for residents to get outside and enjoy the outdoors.

In her spare time, Alex loves being outside and is eagerly awaiting drier trails so she can get back on her mountain bike. She also enjoys camping, hiking in the mountains, and playing the cello.

Have You Seen This Noxious Weed?



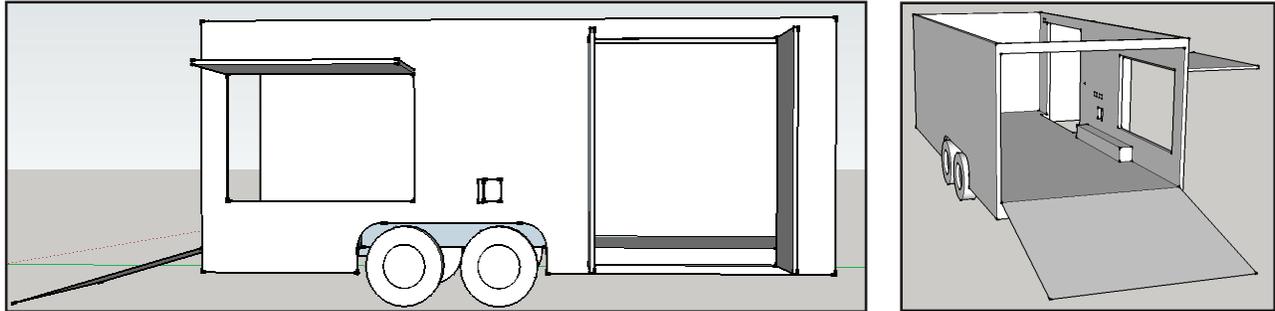
Yellow Flag Iris

Believe it or not this is a noxious weed. Yellow Flag iris is native to the Mediterranean region. It reproduces from rhizomes and seeds that move along the edges of streams, ditches, ponds and wetlands. Today this plant continues to be planted as an ornamental but its aggressive nature and ability to reproduce rapidly makes it very difficult to contain.

Yellow Flag Iris is an aquatic perennial plant that can grow up to four feet tall. Its roots grow up to 15 inches in length with stout rhizomes. Its basal leaves are erect and the upper part of the leaf arches. Flowers are large, pale to deep yellow and have three large sepals. Stalks grow up to four feet tall with several flowers per stalk.

WPM To Purchase New Education Trailer

We are in the process of purchasing a new 8 1/2 ft. x 20 ft. trailer. Double R Trailer came in with the low bid and we will be working closely with them over the next few weeks to create an education trailer that will be driven to many different locations and events. This trailer will provide a learning venue on wheels that the public can walk through, ask questions, and see first hand the services we provide. Please visit our facebook page for updates and photos.



These diagrams show a couple of different angles of the new education trailer.

Gopher & Rock Chuck Removal Services To Resume in March

Ada County Pest Control Crews will report to work in March and gopher and rock chuck removal services will resume at that time. If you live within our pest extermination district, work orders are now being accepted. To check your eligibility or to get on our service schedule please call our office at (208)577-4646 or log onto our website and submit a "Request For Service".



Ada County Pest Control Worker probes a gopher hole.



Western Pocket Gopher

NOXIOUS WEEDS: Why Should We Care?

Noxious weeds are a threat to Idaho's environment and way of life. When these invaders are allowed to invade and spread, they cause a reduction in wildlife forage, degrade fisheries through erosion and sediment buildup, reduce property values, and erode our beautiful landscape. If left untreated, noxious weeds can overtake farmland, pastures, camp grounds, hiking and biking trails, hunting grounds, and fishing holes. Noxious weeds can easily take over a crop if they are allowed to spread, reducing the yield and increasing the costs. All of this will impact the cost of food for everyone at the grocery store.



Scotch Thistle invades empty lot in subdivision.



Whitetop overtakes a pasture.

We live in this beautiful state because of the scenery and the recreational opportunities the land provides. Noxious invaders are one of the greatest environmental threats to Idaho we know today. Areas where noxious weeds are not a problem are the areas we need to protect. Everyone of us can play an important role in this. Whether its cleaning your shoes after a hike, or removing the mud from your bike after a ride, cleaning your boat after a day on the lake, or even cleaning your dog after a walk in the foothills. Simple things like that make a difference

Noxious weeds are everywhere and the seeds they carry stay viable for many years. This means that even if the host plant has long been dead, the seeds left behind can regenerate if given the opportunity. Seeds and other vegetation left on clothing, tires, shoes, pets, or boats should be gathered and disposed of in the trash or burned. If you do notice seeds sticking to your cloths or pets, or anything else, please remove them in that same area. This way seeds will not be transported to different areas.



Eurasian Watermilfoil clogs up Park Center Pond.

Help from the public is important and necessary in the fight against noxious weeds. Unfortunately, most people don't know what weeds are considered noxious and in some cases even have them growing in their own yard. To learn more about the noxious weeds found in Ada County, visit www.adaweb.net/weedcontrolguide. This handy guide is filled with detailed photographs and tips on effective mechanical and cultural weed control methods as well as a chemical control time line.