



January 2014

Ada County Pest of the Month

**A quick guide to identifying and controlling
invasive plants and animals found in the county**

RUSH SKELETONWEED



Rush skeletonweed is a threat to pastures, grain fields and rangelands. Rangeland infestations displace native and beneficial forage species grazed by livestock and wildlife.

Plants are perennials ranging in size from 1 to 5 feet tall. A long slender taproot can grow up to 7 feet deep. Plants begin as a basal rosette of leaves and then grow 1 to 6 branching flowering stems.

Flowerheads are 1/2 inch in diameter and grow in leaf axils and stem tips, single or in clusters. Flowerheads usually have 7 to 15 yellow ray flowers. Yellow flowers are produced at the ends of dark green, nearly leafless stems.

Quick Facts:

Introduced from Southern Europe and is part of the sunflower family.

Plants will exude a milky latex sap when surface is injured.

Basal leaves are lobed and point back towards the leaf base. Leaves on branching stems are few and narrow.

Stems have coarse, downward pointing brown hairs and are hairless toward the tips. Stems are wiry and have few leaves.

Plants spread by seed with each mature plant producing between 1,500 and 20,000 seeds. Seeds survive fewer than 5 years. Also spreads by shoot buds found along lateral roots and from shoot buds found near the top of the main root. It also grows from root fragments in the soil.

Found in pastures, rangeland, cropland, roadsides, open and disturbed areas. Very common in Ada County.



How to Control:

Cultural Control

This plant has a root system that will continue to produce new shoot growth after mechanical damage, so it is difficult to use tillage to control this plant. Burning helps germinate seeds. Since this plant is usually found in dry areas that are not maintained, it is difficult to introduce plants that will successfully compete with it.

Chemical Control

In the fall, we suggest that you consider a product containing Clopyralid such as Transline, Redeem R & P, or Stinger. Clopyralid is a selective, translocated herbicide that will be very effective on this plant. Unlike Round-Up, that will kill both grasses and broadleaves, Clopyralid will leave the grasses, allowing you to offer some competition to the Rush Skeletonweed. The larger full-grown rush skeleton weeds are not as susceptible to these products, but you will have great success against the smaller plants.

Other options: Milestone, Chaparral or Tordon 22K in fall or early spring.

Tips and Tricks:

When making any chemical application, be sure to acquire the correct measuring device when the product is purchased. Many products are used at very low rates and special care is warranted when mixing.

Always make sure that you read and follow any directions on cleaning the spray equipment before and after application. Some chemical products may be very difficult to remove completely from spray equipment and may cause unexpected damage to vegetation at a later time.

Some chemicals require a non-ionic surfactant to maximize their benefit. Make sure to completely read the label in order to get the most effective control. Watch for supplemental labels on herbicide products. The information on them can build a deeper understanding of how the products should be used.

Note: Chemical control of any weed can be difficult and confusing. If you are not experienced in chemical control or do not understand the product label, you should consult a licensed applicator to assist you. Inappropriate application can kill desirable vegetation, and may violate federal law.



For questions or concerns, please contact:

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