



# Weed & Pest

## Noxious Weed Information Series



### Noxious Weeds - What You Should Know

It is important to manage noxious weeds. Noxious weeds are plants not native to our area. They aggressively take over natural and agricultural lands; impacting both economic and natural values. They out-compete native plants and cause a reduction in wildlife habitat.

Colorado has a Noxious Weed Law (CRS 35-5.5 et al.) that requires landowners to control noxious weeds.

The best methods for management depend on the specific type of weed and the time of year they need to be treated. Most noxious weeds found in our area respond well to fall and spring treatments using integrated methods. Integrated management includes different methods of control such as physical pulling of the whole plant, clipping of the seed head, and application of herbicide. Please visit our website at <http://weeds.jeffco.us> to view our Fact Sheets which will assist you in developing a management plan for your property.

### What To Do

#### Control

- Be aware of what is growing on your property and manage all noxious weeds when you find them. If you notice new weeds moving into an area you should react quickly to manage them before they reproduce.
- The law establishes a prioritized list (A, B and C) that designates required levels of management. What the weed is and where it grows within the state determines if it is required to be eradicated, suppressed or contained.
  - Eradication is the most intense level of control resulting in the complete elimination of a plant. This needs to be done before the plants drop their seeds or spread by their roots. Within Jefferson County we have a number of noxious weeds that require this level of intense control. Please visit our website at <http://weeds.jeffco.us> for a complete list of the noxious weeds in Jefferson County. List A.
  - Suppression applies to the majority of the noxious weeds within Jefferson County. Suppression means "reducing the vigor of noxious weed populations within an infested region, decreasing the propensity of noxious weed species to spread to surrounding lands, and mitigating the negative effects of noxious weed populations on infested lands." List B and recommended for List C.
  - Containment means there are certain areas where eradication is the requirement within certain designated areas and suppression in the remaining areas. List B-erad.

#### Prevent

- Many noxious weeds take advantage of disturbed sites. By maintaining good ground cover and managing the health of your land, you may be able to prevent noxious weeds from becoming established.
- Be careful when importing soil, mulch, hay and straw because these are known carriers of weed seeds and fragments which can quickly grow and take over an area.
- Work to educate your neighbors.

### What happens if a landowner does not control their weeds?



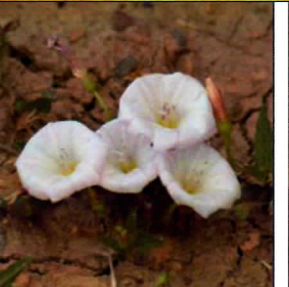
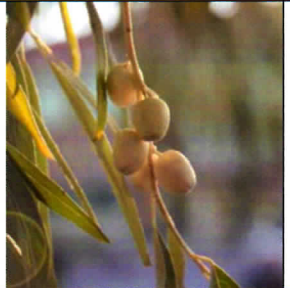

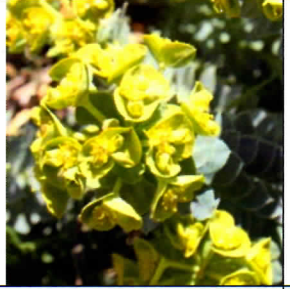


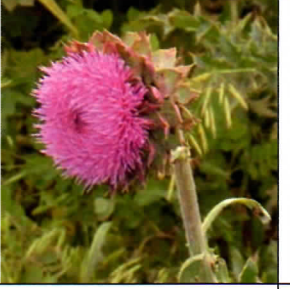


Failure to control noxious weeds may result in the county taking enforcement action. For example the county may directly manage the noxious weeds on your property at your expense.

### Contact Information

Jefferson County Weed & Pest 303-271-5989  
Website: <http://weeds.jeffco.us> email: [adoran@jeffco.us](mailto:adoran@jeffco.us)

### Other Contacts

State Highway Rights-of-Way - CDOT 303-512-5506  
County Rights-of-Way - Jefferson County Road and Bridge 303-271-5219  
Tall weeds in urban areas (unincorporated) - Jefferson County Planning and Zoning 303-271-8753

				
Chamomile B-erad	Ox-eye daisy B erad/sup	Hoary cress B	Field bindweed C	Chicory C
				
Cheatgrass C	Russian olive B	Common mullein C	Teasel B	Chinese clematis B-erad
				
Dyers woad A	Yellow starthistle A	Dalmatian toadflax B	Yellow toadflax B	Sulfur cinquefoil B
				
Leafy spurge B	Myrtle spurge A	Orange hawkweed A	Dames rocket B	Houndstongue B
				
Bull thistle B-erad	Canada thistle B	Musk thistle B	Plumeless thistle B-erad	Scotch thistle B
				
Diffuse knapweed B-erad/sup	Russian knapweed B-erad	Spotted knapweed B-erad	Purple loosestrife A	Tamarisk B-erad

# What the heck is an invasive plant?

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*You say it's nifty, and I say it's noxious.*

*You say it's lovely, and I say it's lousy.*

*Nifty, noxious, lovely, lousy -*

*Let's call them what they are!*

## What is a Native Species?

All organisms are native to planet Earth (until further notice) and each species of bacteria, fungi, plant, animal, and other creature has a home somewhere on this planet where it has existed and evolved for thousands of years. A **native** or indigenous species is one that occurs in a particular place without the help of humans, which is not always easy to determine. Species native to North America are generally recognized as those occurring on the continent prior to European settlement.

An organism's home, or native range, is determined by a host of influences such as climate, geology, soils, hydrology, biological interactions, and natural dispersal. Living things disperse within their native ranges by moving around on their own or with the help of air, water, wind, and other animals. However, beginning with Columbus' discovery of America in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, people have played an increasingly significant role in moving plants, animals and other organisms around the world, to places far beyond their likely natural dispersal ranges. And this is where the trouble lies!

## What's an Exotic Species?

An organism is considered **exotic** (alien, foreign, non-indigenous, non-native) when it has been introduced **by humans** to a location(s) outside its native or natural range. This designation applies to a species introduced from another continent, another ecosystem, and even another habitat within an ecosystem.

For example, black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), a tree that is native to the southern Appalachian region and portions of Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, was planted throughout the U.S. for living fences, erosion control, and other uses for many years. Black locust is considered exotic outside its natural native range because it got to these new places by human introduction rather than by natural dispersal. Another example is saltmarsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), a wetland plant that is native to eastern North American estuaries. Saltmarsh cordgrass was introduced intentionally to western North American shoreline habitats, where it did not occur previously. Sadly, it has become established and is now considered a serious invasive species, displacing native species and adversely impacting wetland communities and several endangered native bird and plant species.

European settlers brought hundreds of plants to North America from their home lands for use as food and

medicine, and for ornamental, sentimental, and other purposes. Introductions of exotic plants continue today and are increasing due to a large and ever-expanding human population, increased international travel and trade, and other factors.

## Once an Exotic, Always an Exotic!

An estimated 3,500 species of exotic plants have escaped cultivation in the U.S., are able to reproduce in the wild, and have become established, or "naturalized". These plants, however much a part of our current landscapes and ecosystems, are nonetheless exotic, since they were moved here by people. For centuries, horticulturists have imported and disseminated interesting new exotic plants. Unfortunately, many of these have become invasive pests that are having serious impacts to native species and ecosystems.

## What Makes an Exotic Species Invasive? (When is a Guest a Pest?)

Many non-native species exist in apparent harmony in environments where they were introduced. For example, a relatively small number of exotic plants (e.g., corn, wheat, rice, oats) form the basis of our agricultural industry and pose little to no known threat to our natural ecosystems. The most important aspect of an alien plant is how it responds to a new environment. An **invasive** species is one that spreads and establishes over large areas, and persists. Invasiveness may be characterized and enhanced by robust vegetative growth, high reproductive rate, abundant seed production, high seed germination rate, and longevity. Some native plants exhibit invasive tendencies in certain situations.

## How Many Plants are Invasive?

According to the Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group, about 1,050 plant species have been reported as being invasive in natural areas in the United States (see list of links). This represents an astonishing one-third or so of the exotic plant species established and self-reproducing in the wild. Some invasive species were planted intentionally for erosion control, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat enhancement, and ornamental purposes. Others have escaped from arboretums, botanical gardens, and our own backyards. Free from the complex array of natural controls present in their native lands, including herbivores, parasites, and diseases, exotic plants may experience rapid and unrestricted growth in novel environments.

## How Bad Are Invasive Species?

Invasive species impact native plants, animals, and natural ecosystems by:

- Reducing native biological diversity
- Altering hydrologic conditions & flooding regimes
- Altering soil characteristics
- Altering fire intensity and frequency
- Interfering with natural succession
- Competing for native pollinators
- Repelling or poisoning native insects
- Displacing rare plant species
- Increasing predation on native birds
- Serving as reservoirs of plant pathogens
- Replacing complex communities with monocultures
- Diluting the genetic composition of native species through hybridization

Jil M. Swearingen, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Center for Urban Ecology. (11 May 2007)

### For additional information, please go to:

- Alien Plant Working Group 'Weeds Gone Wild'  
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien>
- Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force  
<http://www.anstaskforce.gov>
- Ecological Society of America  
<http://esa.sdsc.edu/invas3.htm>
- National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils  
<http://www.naepcc.org>
- National Audubon Society  
<http://www.stopinvasives.org>
- National Invasive Species Council  
<http://www.invasivespecies.gov/council/main.html>
- National Park Service Exotic Plant Management Teams  
<http://www.nature.nps.gov/epmt>
- The Nature Conservancy's Global Invasive Species Initiative  
<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu>
- University of Georgia: Invasive & Exotic Species  
<http://www.invasive.org>
- US Geological Survey  
<http://www.nbii.gov/search/sitemap.html>



### *Weeds Gone Wild:*

*Alien Plant Invaders of Natural Areas* is a project of the Alien Plant Working Group (APWG), a subcommittee of the Plant Conservation Alliance. It is a cooperative effort intended to provide educational materials on the threat posed by invasive exotic plants to the native flora, fauna, and ecosystems of the United States. Additional fact sheet authors are needed, please contact the Chair of the APWG at: [jil\\_swearingen@nps.gov](mailto:jil_swearingen@nps.gov) for more information.

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/>

# Weeds Gone Wild

FACT SHEET:  
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