

Lancaster County Weed Control - City of Lincoln Weed Abatement

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"The WRA is important to identify spread potential and impact potential of a specific plant"

How a plant becomes "Noxious"

In recent years, how a plant is declared noxious has gone through some changes. Technology available today allows us to make a much more informed decision on a plant being considered noxious.

The Nebraska Weed Control Association (NWCA) is constantly monitoring a list of potential invasive plants to evaluate their invasive potential.

Each plant considered now goes through a scientific Weed Risk Assessment (WRA) process. This is designed to aid and support in identifying potential risk species. The WRA is important in identifying spread potential and impact potential of a specific plant. This is essential in helping to identify potential problem plants while the infestation level is still small, and the potential to eradicate it is still possible. During the time



the WRA is being completed the NWCA & Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) conduct surveys and collect data on infestation levels in Nebraska. The NDA sends a survey to all county weed control authorities to see how many counties support the plant being added. Once the WRA and surveys are completed, if the plant is shown to have the potential to be harmful to Nebraska, it goes to the Nebraska Noxious Weed Advisory Committee. This committee uses a set of

nine criteria to determine if the plant should be considered noxious. The plant must meet six out of the nine criteria to be considered. (see "Criteria" page 2) If this committee confirms that the species can become detrimental to Nebraska it recommends it to the Nebraska Director of Agriculture, who following a hearing has the final decision if the plant becomes a noxious weed. The first plant to go through the new process was Japanese knotweed in 2011.

"showed what a group of students that care about protecting the region can accomplish by raising bio-control insects"

Nebraska Weed Control Association Conference

The 66th Annual NWCA conference was held February 12th & 13th in Kearney. While there were a number of great speakers, I wanted to share a couple really neat presentations.

Michael Forsberg, photographer and author from Lincoln shared his

experiences of the Great Plains and the work he is doing. He made the Weed Superintendents aware that their work is important to preserve the great plains of Nebraska for future generations to enjoy.

The Niobrara Purple Loosestrife Project

conducted by the students at Niobrara Public Schools, showed what a group of students that care about protecting the region can accomplish by raising bio-control insects. The insects are released to help control invasive purple loosestrife on the Niobrara River.

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www.lancaster.ne.gov/weeds

News About Weeds That Affects You

By Jan Bruhn, Box Butte County Superintendent

Imagine if grocery stores across the United States began to replace their usual food inventories with poisonous or inedible products from Europe and Asia at a rate of about 14% per year. It wouldn't take long before consumers were up in arms demanding that the replacement practice stop or be reversed. Yet, this is what is happening to wildlife in the Western U.S.

On a yearly basis, invasive non-native plants that are poisonous or inedible to our native wildlife, including birds are infesting forage lands and waterways at an alarming rate. Nebraska's noxious weed list, including Canada thistle, musk thistle, plumeless thistle, spotted knapweed, diffuse knapweed, leafy spurge, purple loosestrife, saltcedar (aka: tamarisk), phragmites, giant knotweed and Japanese knotweed are all non-native invaders. These plants come from Eurasia and have no natural enemies here to help keep them in check. With no natural control agents the plants can grow faster and larger than the native species in the same areas. The invaders put down deeper, more extensive root systems and soon become established. As the invading plants establish their root systems and produce seeds the 'patch' becomes increasingly larger laying claim to more and more area. Monocultures are formed as the invaders crowd out native vegetation. Left untreated, non-native invading plants can take over and dramatically change the ecology of a landscape. Invading plants become weeds that can reduce crop yields, reduce carrying capacity of pastures and create unsightly often impenetrable areas along our waterways.

Weed control authorities continue the fight against invasive weeds. Weed control superintendents across Nebraska will be locating, mapping, monitoring and fighting weed infestations during the upcoming growing season. As the effects of foreign invasive plants continue to be matters of increasing concern on the national and local levels, weed infestations continue to show up and new invaders are identified. The best approach to controlling the spread of these non-native, invasive weeds has proven to be an "integrated management program". Weed Management Areas have been formed across Nebraska as control authorities, weed superintendents and other concerned individuals and agencies join together to get involved in the war on weeds.

Criteria to Designate a Plant as Noxious in Nebraska

1. *The plant poses a documented and immediate threat to Nebraska's economy, environment, social welfare, wildlife, or safety. The plant is either directly or indirectly poisonous or injurious to man, animals, and/or desirable plant species and favors a habitat that results in difficult control and is in direct conflict with human activities.*
2. *The plant reproduces and disseminates rapidly under normal land management practices.*
3. *The plant is not native to Nebraska.*
4. *At least two bordering states have designated the plant as noxious, and the plant has a documented history of causing considerable difficulties in those or other areas.*
5. *Infestations of the plant within Nebraska have been properly surveyed and documented by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture's noxious weed program staff, together with and in association with county weed control superintendents.*
6. *The Nebraska Department of Agriculture has reviewed and researched published literature concerning the plant and has prepared a written objective report on the plant for review and discussion by the Nebraska Noxious Weed Advisory Committee.*
7. *At least 5% of Nebraska's counties favor the designation of the plant as noxious. The Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture will solicit this opinion by contacting each county weed control authority for a response.*
8. *The Nebraska Weed Control Association has recommended to the Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture that the plant be designated a noxious weed.*
9. *The Nebraska Noxious Weed Advisory Committee has recommended to the Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture that the plant be designated a noxious weed in Nebraska.*