

# Lancaster County Weed Control – City of Lincoln Weed Abatement

## Common Milkweed & the Monarch Butterfly

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*“Without milkweed, monarchs can’t successfully reproduce and the species declines”*

### Friend OR Foe?

During recent years our office has been involved in many conversations concerning common milkweed and its relationship to the decline of the Monarch butterfly.

Let me be clear; milkweed will NEVER become a “noxious weed” in Nebraska. One of the criteria for a plant to be considered noxious in Nebraska is; it has to be a non-native plant. The term “noxious” requires a landowner to control the plants on their property. Milkweed is a native plant in the United States and will NOT be considered a noxious plant in Nebraska.

Long considered a problem weed in agriculture, milkweed was considered a pest plant. In most cases farmers would try almost anything to eradicate milkweed from their fields.

According to the National Wildlife Federation, the monarch butterfly population in North America has

plummeted by over 90% in just the last 20 years. Destruction of America’s grasslands ecosystems, commercial agricultural practices and even conventional gardening have all contributed to the precipitous decline of this iconic species. One of the biggest factors in monarch decline is the increasing scarcity of its caterpillar host plant: milkweed. Without milkweed, monarchs can’t successfully reproduce and the species declines.

Over-wintering monarch butterflies in Mexico begin to make the journey north to the United States in

early spring. Soon after they leave Mexico, pairs of monarchs mate. As they reach the southern United States, females will look for available milkweed plants to lay eggs, hatching into caterpillars who feed on the available milkweed plant.

The adult monarchs continue the journey north that was left unfinished by their parents. Each year, about five generations will be born to continue migrating north. It is only the last generation, born in late summer that will live eight months and migrate back to Mexico to start the cycle over again.



**STOP INVASIVE SPECIES  
IN YOUR TRACKS.**

[PlayCleanGo.org](http://PlayCleanGo.org)

## National Invasive Species Awareness Week

[National Invasive Species Awareness Week](#) is scheduled for February 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Experts with the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) report invasive weeds alone represent a multibillion dollar annual drain on our economy “It is extremely important that we

educate ourselves, become mindful of invasive species and use what we know to guide our actions throughout the year,” says Lee Van Wychen, Ph.D., science policy director of WSSA. National Invasive Species Week organizers suggest the following tips for staying informed and

making wise decisions: Learn about invasive species, especially those found in your area. Clean hiking boots, waders, boats and trailers, off-road vehicles and other gear to stop invasive species from hitching a ride to a new location.

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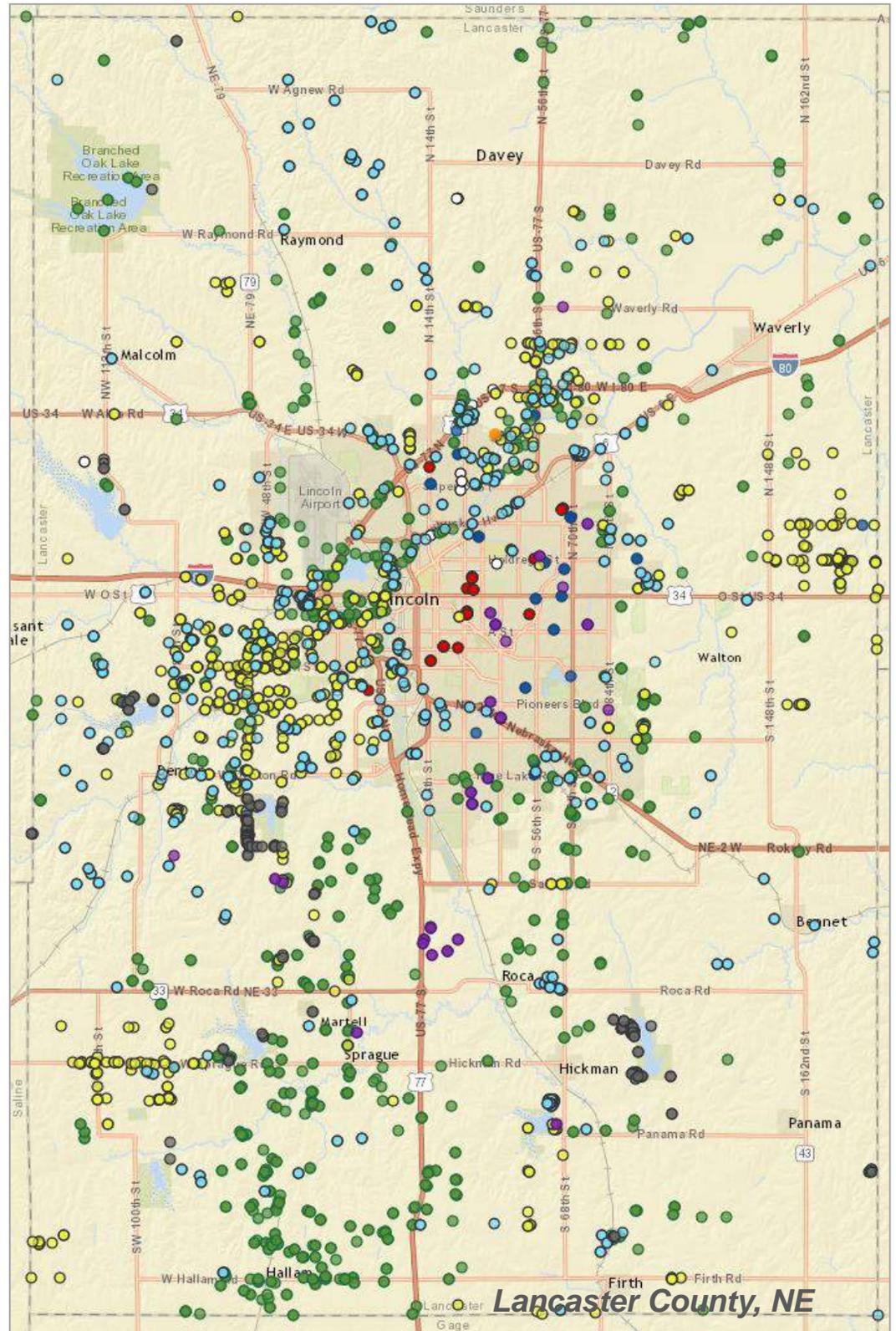
We're on the Web!  
[www.lancaster.ne.gov/weeds](http://www.lancaster.ne.gov/weeds)

Map Key

- Phragmites
- Saltcedar
- Leafy spurge
- Purple loosestrife
- Canada thistle
- Teasel
- Knotweed
- Sericea lespedeza
- Musk thistle

Good Neighbors –  
Control Invasive Weeds !!!

## 2015 Noxious Weed Locations



Lancaster County, NE