



Weed Abatement Program

Lancaster County / City of Lincoln

May 2012

www.lancaster.ne.gov/weeds

The following is an article from the Lincoln JournalStar on May 18th.

Warm weather, weedy lawns keep inspectors busy

**By: Michael Bamesberger,
Lincoln JournalStar**

City ordinances governing weeds and hedges aren't well known among Lincoln residents, but they can cost those who don't abide.

One ordinance mandates property owners to cut and clear "weeds and worthless vegetation" that have grown more than 6 inches tall. Another governs landscaping in the "park space," the area between the street and sidewalk, and mandates that plants and hedges stay less than 30 inches tall and not grow onto sidewalks.



Musk thistle in a backyard in Lincoln

Failure to comply can result in a visit from a city-contracted mower -- and a bill after the work is done.

Brent Meyer, weed control superintendent, said thousands of complaints are filed every year with the Lancaster Weed Control Authority and Public Works.

This year, a warm spring pushed the growing season four weeks earlier than usual, Meyer said, causing an increase in weed growth as well as the number of inspections. So far, Weed Control has done 728 inspections.

Other than being unsightly, tall weeds can reduce property values, attract pests, exacerbate health problems and become fire hazards, he said.

A common problem is lack of awareness. For example, residents living along arterial streets often say they didn't know they were responsible for cutting grass and weeds along the street, even if the weeds are separated from their lawn by a fence, Meyer said.

Last year, the agency sent contractors to cut down weeds 269 times -- returning to some properties more than once.

The problem isn't isolated to one part of the city.

"With the foreclosure problem, it's everywhere," Meyer said. "There are some very nice properties that get out of control because all of a sudden, no one lives there."

When homeowners don't respond to violations or don't comply in time, the city is authorized to have the area mowed and send a bill for the work, plus a \$100 fee.

If the fees aren't paid, city law allows the cost to be assessed as a lien against property.

Meyer said most people are cooperative, but a few properties are repeat offenders.

"We already have one property we are mowing for the second time this year," he said. "It's going to be a long summer."

Inspection Activity

Weed Abatement Inspections

With the early spring weather in 2012, inspections on weed abatement are up 162.7% at the end of May. In 2011 we had a total of 587 weed abatement inspections completed. At the same time this year we have already completed 1,542 inspections.



Weed abatement violation

Complaints

Weed control has received 636 complaints already in 2012 compared to 327 at the end of May in 2011. This is 309 more complaints for an increase of 94.5%.

Notices & Force controls

As of the end of May we had sent 200 legal notices and performed 23 force cuttings.



Contractors hired to do force mowing

Noxious Weeds within City Limits Inspections

Noxious weed inspections are way ahead of a normal year as well. Our inspectors have completed 499 noxious weed inspections

compared to 308 last year. That is an increase of 191 inspections or 62%.

Infestations – May 31

Our first round of inspections are complete on musk thistle, Canada thistle and leafy spurge. The inspections are just beginning on the other listed noxious weeds.

May 31, 2012

Noxious weed	Sites
Musk thistle	169
Leafy spurge	61
Phragmites	18
Knotweed	5
Canada thistle	2
Saltcedar	1
Purple loosestrife	1

Japanese Knotweed at 56th & Holdrege



Japanese Knotweed prior to chemical application



Japanese Knotweed after chemical application

June Planned Activities

- 6 5 Rivers WMA
- 8 NE Invasive Species Council
- 14 Management Team Meeting
- 19 LPWMA Meeting
- 21 Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center – Weed Walk
- 28 Problem Resolution Team
- 29 Monthly activity report