



Lancaster County Weed Control - City of Lincoln Weed Abatement

December 2012

www.lancaster.ne.gov/weeds

Drought & Weeds

With the drought we experienced in Lancaster County and across the state most would expect that our noxious weed inspections and infestations would have been less in 2012. Unfortunately that is one of the things that makes a noxious weed so hard to control is its ability to survive during stressful conditions. We find especially with the deep rooted perennials such as leafy spurge, knotweed, Canada thistle and phragmites that they are able to out compete other vegetation for water and survive. Another comment I hear often is that since the plant is stressed from the drought that it should be easy to kill. Actually, the opposite is more likely in most cases. When a plant is under stress from drought it often tends to go into survival mode and shuts down. This makes it very difficult to get the chemical that's applied to the plant leaf into the plant. Usually results are less than you would expect and far less than if the plant is healthy and taking in nutrients. The little moisture we received this fall helped germinate the biennial plants such as musk thistle, plumeless thistle, dandelions & henbit, this allowed landowners to get some good control on musk thistle before the snow. Many of the rosettes were only 1 to 2 inches in diameter and very easy to control. This is the most effective time to control biennials since they are taking down nutrients to survive the winter.

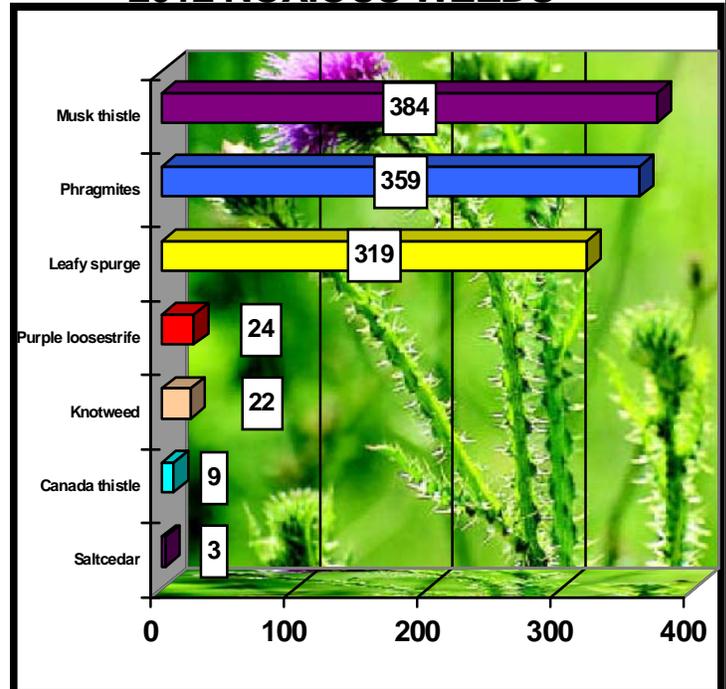


Musk thistle rosette in the fall

2012 Infestation Totals

Musk thistle was still the #1 problem weed in 2012 coming in with 384 parcels having at least a trace infestation. While the number of sites is still high, most of the sites are light to moderate infestations and are being managed by the landowner.

2012 NOXIOUS WEEDS



Phragmites takes over the #2 spot this year, up 23.8% from 290 locations in 2011 to 359 in 2012. Most landowners are working on eradicating this stubborn invasive, but it will take a few years to see long lasting results. Leafy spurge drops one spot to #3 with 319 locations this year compared to 321 in 2011. Purple loosestrife, Canada thistle and saltcedar all continue to decline. A few new locations of knotweed were reported in 2012 but overall we saw a decrease in sites that remain infested.

Good Neighbors – Control Noxious Weeds!