

# Lancaster County Weed Control – City of Lincoln Weed Abatement

## Musk Thistle Management

MAY 2014

Musk Thistle Management	1
Noxious Weed ID Guide	2

*“musk thistle is a noxious weed in Nebraska and every landowner is required by State Law to control it on their property”*

*“Musk thistle reproduces only by seed; however a single musk thistle plant can produce thousands of seeds”*



Now is a great time to scout your property and treat this pesky weed before it takes over. If you didn't get your [musk thistle](#) treated last fall you still have time to get it done this spring. If you had a patch of musk thistle last year, and didn't get them controlled, I guarantee you will have more this year. Because of its aggressive nature, musk thistle is a noxious weed in Nebraska and every landowner is required by State Law to control it on their property. Musk thistle, classified as a biennial, is already springing up in the rosette stage. Rosettes range in size from quite small (a few inches) to three feet in

diameter. They hug the ground and can be difficult to see until they're under foot. The larger rosettes are usually the seedlings that germinated last fall and over-wintered as a rosette. As a biennial, this second year growth will produce flowers and seeds during this season. As the seeds germinate, the process begins again. Musk thistle reproduces only by seed; however a single musk thistle plant can produce thousands of seeds, which can lie dormant in the soil for years. Mature plants that are chopped and left in the field may have enough energy to produce viable seed, so proper disposal of

the seed head is important. Large infestations of musk thistle may require herbicide control. Musk thistle plants are quite easy to control with herbicides when treated in the rosette stage of growth. Herbicides should be applied in the spring before the flower stalks begin to form and elongate. Repeated applications may be necessary to eliminate the musk thistle infestation. *The UNL Extension [EC-130, Guide for Weed Management](#)*, has products recommended for the control of musk thistle. Always read and follow the label of every product you use, as **the label is the law.**

Lancaster County  
Weed Control  
444 Cherrycreek Rd. Bldg B  
Lincoln, NE. 68528

Phone:  
402.441.7817

Fax:  
402.441.8616

E-mail:  
weeds@lancaster.ne.gov

Good Neighbors Control Their Weeds!



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

# Nebraska's Noxious Weeds

*It is the duty of each person who owns or controls land to effectively control noxious weeds on such land.*

Noxious weed is a legal term used to denote a destructive or harmful weed for the purpose of regulation. The Director of Agriculture establishes which plants are noxious. These non-native plants compete aggressively with desirable plants and vegetation. Failure to control noxious weeds in this state is a serious problem which is detrimental to the production of crops and livestock, and to the welfare of residents of this state. Noxious weeds may also devalue land and reduce tax revenue.

<p><b>Musk Thistle</b> Height 1.6–9.8 ft</p> <p>Pink to purple flowers Mature seedhead</p>	<p><b>Canada Thistle</b> Height 1–3.9 ft</p> <p>Pink to purple flowers</p>	<p><b>Plumeless Thistle</b> Height 1–4.9 ft</p> <p>Purple flowers</p>
<p><b>Phragmites</b> Height 3.2–20 ft</p> <p>Young seedhead Mature seedhead</p>	<p><b>Leafy Spurge</b> Height .3–2.6 ft</p> <p>Large yellow leaves (bracts) Stems/leaves have milky sap</p>	<p><b>Sericea Lespedeza</b> Height 1.5–6.5 ft</p> <p>White or cream to yellowish white flowers</p>
<p><b>Japanese Knotweed</b> Height 3–10 ft</p> <p>Creamy white to greenish white flowers</p>	<p><b>Giant Knotweed</b> Height 8–13 ft</p> <p>Creamy white to greenish white flowers</p>	<p><b>Purple Loosestrife</b> Height 1.3–8 ft</p> <p>Purple to magenta flowers</p>
<p><b>Saltcedar</b> Height 3.3–20 ft</p> <p>Pink to white flowers</p>	<p><b>Spotted Knapweed</b> Height 1–3.9 ft</p> <p>Lavender to purple flowers</p>	<p><b>Diffuse Knapweed</b> Height 1–3.9 ft</p> <p>White/purplish flowers</p>

**GOOD NEIGHBORS CONTROL NOXIOUS WEEDS**

If you have questions or concerns about noxious weeds, please contact your local county noxious weed control authority, Nebraska Weed Control Association ([www.neweed.org](http://www.neweed.org)), or Nebraska Department of Agriculture ([www.agr.ne.gov/noxious\\_weed](http://www.agr.ne.gov/noxious_weed))

Download to print from our website: [weeds.lancaster.ne.gov](http://weeds.lancaster.ne.gov)