

Lancaster County Weed Control – City of Lincoln Weed Abatement

Biological Control on Noxious Weeds

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Musk thistle seed-head
- no weevil present



Musk thistle seed-head where the
weevil have eaten all the seed

*“the bugs will not eat themselves
out of their livelihood”*

*“I do not recommend
buying any insects from a
mail order supplier”*

Our office receives calls every year from landowners that have heard or read that there is a bug that will eat noxious weeds. Wanting to know how they can get some to get rid of their weed problems. Here are some of the questions that need answered.

Does it work?

In some cases biological control does help reduce the number of plants.

Will bugs eliminate my noxious weeds?

NO, the bugs will not eat themselves out of their livelihood. The insects help keep large infestations in check, but they will not eradicate the problem.

Wouldn't it be easier?

NO, Biocontrol requires a lot of time and effort to make it successful. Plus only about 1 in 10 releases successfully

establish.

Is there biocontrol in Lancaster County?

YES, both on leafy spurge and musk thistle. The leafy spurge beetles have had some success across Nebraska. The Nebraska Weed Control Association has worked over the years to set up leafy spurge beetle insectaries in most all the northern counties across the state. Insects are collected and moved to new sites annually. The beetles were released a number of years ago in Lancaster County, but have never really establish. The musk thistle seed head weevil is in abundance across the county and I very seldom find a plant that the weevil haven't eaten the seeds out of the top two or three primary blooms. The problem being the

life cycle of the weevil is not long enough in our region to eat all the seeds, this leaves the plant to continue to produce thousands of seeds. The next time you're out chopping thistles, take a break and open the top seed head and you will notice the seeds are gone and the seed head appears to be tucked in and not blowing in the wind.

Where can I buy them?

I do not recommend buying any insects from a mail order supplier. Contact our office and we can discuss if biocontrol is right for your noxious weed problem.

Biological control is NOT an acceptable control option in Lancaster County and must only be used along with traditional control methods to prevent noxious weeds from spreading.

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Good Neighbors Control Their Weeds!



We're on the Web!
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>Musk Thistle Height 1.6–9.8 ft</p> <p>Pink to purple flowers Mature seedhead</p>	<p>Canada Thistle Height 1–3.9 ft</p> <p>Pink to purple flowers</p>	<p>Plumeless Thistle Height 1–4.9 ft</p> <p>Purple flowers</p>
<p>Phragmites Height 3.2–20 ft</p> <p>Young seedhead Mature seedhead</p>	<p>Leafy Spurge Height .3–2.6 ft</p> <p>Large yellow leaves (bracts) Stems/leaves have milky sap</p>	<p>Sericea Lespedeza Height 1.5–6.5 ft</p> <p>White or cream to yellowish white flowers</p>
<p>Japanese Knotweed Height 3–10 ft</p> <p>Creamy white to greenish white flowers</p>	<p>Giant Knotweed Height 8–13 ft</p> <p>Creamy white to greenish white flowers</p>	<p>Purple Loosestrife Height 1.3–8 ft</p> <p>Purple to magenta flowers</p>
<p>Saltcedar Height 3.3–20 ft</p> <p>Pink to white flowers</p>	<p>Spotted Knapweed Height 1–3.9 ft</p> <p>Lavender to purple flowers</p>	<p>Diffuse Knapweed 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), or Nebraska Department of Agriculture (www.agr.ne.gov/noxious_weed)

Download to print from our website: weeds.lancaster.ne.gov