

Weeds: ob-NOXIOUS and Otherwise

By Christina Lacie | Posted: Tuesday, June 11, 2013 11:00 pm

There are commonplace weeds like Dandelion, Catchweed bedstraw (long clingy things), Shotweed and Bindweed (to name a few) that we deal with regularly. Yank. Pull. Yank. Pull. And then, there are NOXIOUS weeds. They are the bad boys of the weed world. Invasive, disruptive and ill-behaved, they wreak havoc in our pastures, forests and waterways and threaten native plants.

Noxious weeds are nonnative weeds/plants that have either escaped yards and invaded surrounding areas like uninvited guests lacking manners or have stowed away on ships and crept in under the radar (or not). Regardless of how they arrived or escaped, these weeds have to be dealt with more seriously. According to the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, these disruptive louts are divided into three classes: A, B and C. Each class has its own defining characteristics and recommendations in handling them (go to www.nwcb.wa.gov, an incredible site that pictures and lists all noxious weeds of concern statewide). Class A weeds are nonnatives that have relatively limited distribution, but they MUST be eradicated. It is a state law. In this group: Bighead knapweed, Eggleaf spurge, Kudzu, Milk thistle, Yellow devil hawkweed and many more with equally interesting names. Class B weeds are also non-native species that are scattered farther afield throughout the state and/or absent/abundant. The goal with this class is to contain and control the weeds to prevent the spread to new areas. Among them: Knotweed, Policeman's helmet, Butterfly bush, Scotch broom, Wild Chervil, Herb Robert (aka Stinky Bob), Gorse, Common fennel and Yellow archangel.

Class C weeds are nonnatives that are widespread. Each county governs how they will deal with them— educate residents or enforce control. Included in this group are: Absinth wormwood, Canada thistle, English Ivy, Evergreen blackberry, Old man's beard, and Yellow toadflax.

The Jefferson County Noxious Weed Board has a map of East Jefferson County and the number of sightings of various noxious weeds. Please take a look around and help eradicate what can adversely affect our native flora and fauna.

NOTE: 18th annual Secret Garden Tour and Plant Sale in Port Townsend on Saturday, June 22, 10am-4 pm. Go to www.secregardenjeffco.org or call 379-1172 for ticket and other information.

Tansy Ragwort = Toxic