

NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT

Noxious weeds are a serious environmental and economic threat in Gallatin County and Montana. Noxious weeds are non-native plants that compete with desirable plants for nutrients and room to grow. Most noxious weeds found in Montana, including Spotted knapweed, are native to Eurasia.

Environmental, natural, and cultural controls such as plant competition, insects, diseases, and grazing have kept these plants from becoming problems in their native habitat. Since these competitive factors did not migrate with the plant, noxious weeds in Montana grow virtually unhindered.

Noxious weeds choke out native plant species, decreasing the productivity and value of the land. Noxious weeds do not limit themselves to agricultural areas; they can invade all lands in Montana. Noxious weeds have the potential to reduce bio-diversity, increase soil erosion, reduce wildlife habitat and numbers, decrease land/property values, as well as diminish water quality.

What can we do about noxious weeds? Just as there are different weed species, there are different solutions. The common thread of every weed control program is working together and working according to a well thought out plan. Planning and cooperation are the keys. Here's why:

- * **Weeds do not respect borders or manmade boundaries.**

If one landowner cleans up his/her property, and a neighbor doesn't, noxious weeds re-infest the clean property.

- * **Control programs can involve various methods.**

Controlled grazing, mowing, hand pulling, burning, herbicides, and biological controls all play vital roles in controlling noxious weeds. Success requires coordination and planning to maximize effectiveness and insure that each method is only used where environmentally safe.

- * **Noxious weeds are everyone's problem, thus everyone must contribute to their control.**

The Montana Weed Control Act (7-22-2101 through 2153) states that it is unlawful for any person to permit any noxious weed to propagate or to go to seed on his/her property. This law exempts anyone entering into and in compliance with a noxious weed management agreement approved by the Gallatin County Weed District.

If you have noxious weeds on your property or have any questions, please contact the Gallatin County Weed District at 582-3265. The Weed District can provide assistance with noxious weed identification, developing weed management plans, biological control, herbicide recommendations, cost share and sprayer rental programs.