

## KOOTENAI COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS FAQ

**QUESTION:** Is there a law in Idaho that requires landowners to control the noxious weeds on their property?

**ANSWER:** Yes. You may access the Idaho statute at <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/Title22/T22CH24/>

**QUESTION:** I thought the Noxious Weed Control Office took care of all the weeds in the county?

**ANSWER:** Idaho State law states that it is the responsibility of the land owner to control the noxious weeds on their property.

**QUESTION:** Who takes care of the noxious weeds on private roads?

**ANSWER:** The land owner(s) or homeowner's association is responsible for controlling the noxious weeds in these areas.

**QUESTION:** What is a noxious weed?

**ANSWER:** Noxious weeds are non-native plants that were brought into Idaho through human actions. Because they grow aggressively and have no natural enemies in our area, these species of plants can be destructive to wildlife habitat, competitive with crops and difficult to control. Legally, a noxious weed is any plant designated by a Federal, State or county government as injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife or property. Some characteristics of noxious weeds include:

- They produce large numbers of new plants each season.
- They tolerate many soil types and weather conditions.
- They spread easily and efficiently, usually by wind, water, or animals
- They grow rapidly, allowing them to displace slower growing plants.
- Spread rampantly when they are free of the natural checks and balances found in their native range.

**QUESTION:** How did noxious weeds get here and where did they come from?

**ANSWER:** Most of these weeds came from Europe and Asia and were transported to the United States with the colonists who brought many plants and seeds species when they came to the United States. Accidental transport occurred in the ballast of ships, in the fleece and hair of livestock, in clothing, and as contaminants in agricultural seed. Other weeds came in as medicine, dyes and ornamental plants. A portion of the noxious weeds were intentionally introduced for use in agriculture, landscaping, erosion control and for sale in the nursery trade.

**QUESTION:** My neighbor has spotted knapweed it looks bad and it is blowing into my yard. What can I do?

**ANSWER:** Is your property being maintained? If so, spotted knapweed will not take hold in a property that is being watered, fertilized and mowed. Do you live within the city limits? Most cities have ordinances for vegetation height that are stricter than the state weed law. Contact the Code Enforcement Officer in your city. Do you live in a subdivision/neighborhood with covenants? Many homeowner associations have stricter rules than the state weed law and can have properties maintained within a subdivision at a cost to the owner. Homeowner associations can notify property owners (both local and "absentee") about weed control and some will have the maintenance done and then send them a bill. Most people will voluntarily take appropriate action once they become aware of the

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problem. If there is a property within Kootenai County that is infested and the owner is not controlling noxious weeds then the County weed control can respond to official complaints.

**QUESTION:** The spotted knapweed on my neighbor's property looks awful! Would you please do an inspection and make them spray it?

**ANSWER:** When spotted knapweed gets high and dry, it looks bad. Spraying doesn't solve the problem because it's usually too high and too hot to spray. We will gladly do an inspection and inform your neighbor that according to Idaho State Law it is the responsibility of the homeowner to control noxious weeds on their property. This office supports mowing as a **control and containment** method (which is supported in the State law), but we cannot make people spray their weeds (landowner rights). Also, mowing needs to be done when it's safe, once the weather has cooled and/or rain has relieved the dry conditions.

**QUESTION:** What is a surfactant and why should I use one?

**ANSWER:** It is common to use adjuvant/surfactants mixed with herbicides. These products, sometimes call spreader-stickers, increase the success of the treatment. They do this by improved penetration, increasing coverage, and extra absorption on the plants being sprayed. Some common brand names are: R-11, R-900 and Sylgard 309.

If there are any questions about the use of a chemical product, please call your local weed control agency for instructions.

**QUESTION:** Every year I spray the weeds on my property and the next year it seems I have as many or more than before. How can I stop the weeds?

**ANSWER:** Herbicides are powerful tools, so they must be used according to label directions. Unfortunately, herbicides are used too often as the only control method. Herbicides can be one component of a good management plan. Other methods include:

- Hoeing, hand pulling and mowing.
- Planting or over seeding the area with desirable grasses. If watering is an issue, use drought tolerant pasture grass seed.
- Fertilizing to encourage existing grasses to spread out and take over bare ground.

**QUESTION:** I would like to know what types of weeds are growing on my property. Can the Noxious Weed Control Department help me with this?

**ANSWER:** Yes. Please call our office or submit the Investigation Request from this website. We will be happy to set up a site visit with you. We will discuss the different weeds you have and how to control them.

**QUESTION:** Does your office provide herbicide to private landowners or can they purchase it from the county?

**ANSWER:** No, the county does not sell herbicide, nor does it give herbicide to private landowners.

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**QUESTION:** Why should I care about noxious weeds? I want my land to be natural!

**ANSWER:** Letting noxious weeds take over your property does not leave your land *natural*. Noxious weeds will eventually replace all native vegetation if the land is not managed correctly.

Do you have a noxious weed question? Call us at **446-1290** or email your question to [kcnnoxiousweeds@kcgov.us](mailto:kcnnoxiousweeds@kcgov.us)