



2020 Weed Awareness

The Weed Control Authority is responsible for implementation of the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act throughout Lancaster County. The authority has also provided the inspection and administration of the City of Lincoln's Weed Abatement Program since entering into an interlocal agreement with the city in 1996.

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Weed Prevention: Identify and Restrict Pathways for Spreading

Lancaster County Weed Control

Prevention is the most effective method of dealing with weeds. Once a weed has entered an area and become established, eradication is far more expensive and it is likely that greater resources will be required to control its further spread and reduce its impact.

The first step in weed prevention — and the most cost effective means of managing weeds — is preventing the entry of new weeds into an area.

Once a weed has entered into an area, Early Detection — Rapid Response (EDRR) is crucial to reduce its potential environmental and economic impacts. It is much easier to treat weeds when present in small numbers than when they are well established.

EDRR requires an awareness and understanding of the factors that favor the establishment and spread of weeds, and applying appropriate management practices that can prevent or reduce the risks.

The importance of weed spread prevention has grown with the recognition that the spread of most weeds occurs through similar pathways, such as the movement of goods, animals and vehicles contaminated with weed seeds.

Weed Prevention in Agriculture

In agriculture, the pathways for spread include transported livestock and forage (food, especially dried hay or feed, for cattle and other livestock), contaminated crop and pasture seeds, deliberate introductions of new species, and contaminated machinery such as harvesters and recreational vehicles (including boats which can spread aquatic weeds).



Vehicles can be a pathway that weeds are spread.

There are many ways to prevent weeds in agricultural activities which are well known including:

Restricting the opportunity for new weeds to invade and spread:

- Be vigilant about introducing stock, forage or seed onto your property to ensure weeds will not be introduced.
- When buying stock, find out where the stock has come from and what weeds infest that area.
- Buy certified weed-free forage and seed where possible.
- Restrict the movement of vehicles and machinery on your property in periods when seeds are likely to spread.
- Establish tracks and roadways along which vehicle movement can be concentrated.
- Wash down vehicles which have been in known infested areas.
- Do not allow machinery or vehicles to enter your property unless they are clean.

Restricting the spread of existing weed infestations:

- Carry out control works prior to other works.
- Cut and cultivate when weeds are outside of seeding period.

- Work the clean area first and the infested area last. Work from the outside in and clean down equipment prior to moving into a clean area.

Quarantine:

- Hold livestock that may be infested with seed in a single location until they are shorn or until weed seeds have had the chance to pass through their digestive system.
- Feed out infested forage in a feedlot-type situation only and introduce clean forage to stock.

Monitor:

- Continually monitor weed infestations and carry out control works.

Weed Prevention in Your Backyard

Plants from commercial nurseries, landscaping suppliers and gardening clubs can also be pathways for the introduction and spread of weeds. Another significant cause of weed spread is inappropriate use and disposal of garden waste.

There are a large number of potential weeds in our gardens. Private gardens contain thousands of plant species with weed potential; however, the likelihood any particular plant will become a weed is difficult to predict.

Weed Prevention in the Natural Environment

Landscapes that contain a diversity of healthy, vigorous vegetation with

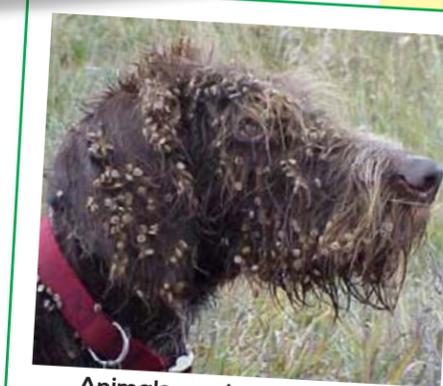
very little bare ground have the ability, in most cases, to discourage weed invasion. It is important to reduce the risk of the environment becoming vulnerable to invasion by exotic species by encouraging beneficial vegetation growth and by avoiding disturbance as much as possible.

Measures for weed prevention in the landscape include:

- Minimize the disturbance of desirable plants along trails, roads and waterways.
- Maintain desired plant communities through good management.
- Monitor high-risk areas such as transportation corridors and bare ground.
- Revegetate disturbed sites with desired plants.



Boots and clothing can be pathways.



Animals can be a pathway.



STOP INVASIVE SPECIES IN YOUR TRACKS.

PlayCleanGo.org

Pledge To Stop Invasive Species

Invasive species can cause damage to the economy, the environment and to human health. But **each person can make a difference** in preventing new invasions and stopping the spread of existing ones!

People across North America are joining together to protect the places we love by taking the **PlayCleanGo Pledge**.

When you take the Pledge to stop invasive species, you agree to:

- **Remove** plants, animals and mud from your boots, gear, boat and trailer.

- **Clean** your gear before entering and leaving a recreation site.

- **Drain** bilge, ballast, wells and buckets before leaving the area.

- **Dry** equipment before launching into another body of water.

- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in a sealed container.

- **Use** certified or local firewood and hay.

Visit www.playcleango.org and take the pledge.

Be Careful What You Plant

Brown County Weed Control

Many of us enjoy passing the long, dark winter months pouring through the numerous gardening catalogs that fill our mailboxes and our minds with images of beautiful and unique flowers and plants we can't wait to try to grow in our own gardens. There is nothing wrong with wanting to beautify our living spaces.

There is a right way and a wrong way to bring exotic plants into our environment. By buying plants which have been vetted, you can enjoy them for many years. If you buy new plants the wrong way,

you could be introducing the next noxious invader into your area that may cost much money and time to eradicate. Here are some common-sense rules to remember when buying plants and seeds online.

The first and most important rule is to never buy seeds from foreign countries, especially China and Vietnam. Seeds from these places pose the greatest risks. These plants could escape and establish themselves in road ditches, along streams and in our pastures. A second red flag to look for is the price the seller is asking for the offering. If the price seems low, like 99 cents for several seeds, that usually

indicates you are not buying quality. There is a cost to properly prepare seeds and document them for sale and shipment. Cheap seeds can harbor fungal spores and other weed seeds. Buying live plants pose other risks as well. The soil and packing materials can bring in unwanted seed, insects or insect eggs. This has happened before. There was an instance of a plant being shipped from the southern U.S. in soil that had fire ants in it.

Seed Exchange sites can be a bit of a disappointment, and risky as well. Seeds we plant don't always turn out

the way we think they should. *continued on next page*



This ornamental knotweed grew out of control.

WEED AWARENESS

Noxious Weed Control – It's the Law!

Sheridan County Weed Control

The Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act states that “it is the duty of every person who owns or controls land in the state of Nebraska to effectively control noxious weeds on such land.” It's the law, pure and simple.

What is a Noxious Weed and Where Do They Come From?

Noxious weeds are non-native invasive plants — most of which originated in Europe — and arrived in the U.S. by accident in the ballast of a ship, or on purpose as an ornamental. Because these plants are not native, the insects, diseases and animals that would normally help to control these plants, are not found here. This gives the weeds the advantage to invade and crowd out desirable vegetation in cropland, pasture, rangeland and other native habitats. These weeds invade roadsides and disturbed areas, displacing native plants and reducing habitat quality for wildlife.

Noxious weeds are spread by seed, wind, water, animals and neighbors. Forage moving from one landowner, county or

state to another should be noxious weed-seed free. For most noxious weeds, the seeds can lay dormant in the soil for many years, just waiting for the opportunity to fill a void in disturbed or neglected areas.

Perhaps the Most Important Step to Noxious Weed Control is Prevention

Be on the lookout on your property for “plants out of place,” and learn to identify noxious and invasive plants. If detected quickly, noxious weeds can be controlled before they get a chance to get established.

I've Got Noxious Weeds on My Property. Now What Do I Do?

Once noxious or invasive weeds are found on your property, there are several factors which can affect your noxious weed control:

- Correct plant identification.
- Method of control.
- If using an herbicide, using the right product for the job.
- Appropriate timing of control (i.e. proper growth stage of the plant).



Noxious weeds are non-native invasive plants legally designated as a serious threat to agriculture and landscapes.

Your local County Weed Control or Extension office should be able to assist with plant identification. The best tool to help answer many weed control questions is Nebraska Extension's *Guide for Weed, Disease and Insect Management in Nebraska* (EC130). It is updated annually, and can be purchased from your local Extension office.

Types of control for noxious and invasive weeds can include cultural, mechanical, biological or herbicide control. **Cultural** control involves the establishment of competitive vegetation to prevent or slow down the invasion of weeds. **Mechanical** control includes pulling, digging, disking, plowing or mowing noxious

weeds. **Biological** control includes the use of federally approved insects or pathogens that attack specific weed species. **Herbicide** control includes the use of herbicides that are often the most economical and effective type of control. Herbicides are specific for each noxious weed, so make sure you apply the right herbicide, at the right time and according to the label instructions. The label is the LAW!

What is the advantage of spraying a small patch of noxious weeds? If you get that patch sprayed when it's the size of a pickup — it may cost a few dollars. Wait until those weeds spread across several acres, and you now have to invest hundreds

or thousands of dollars. If you choose to ignore or procrastinate your noxious weed control, in the long run, you'll spend more dollars, as well as time.

How about certified organic farmers? Are they exempt from controlling noxious weeds? No, not at all. It is the duty of every landowner to control the noxious weeds on his or her property. There are alternative control methods and products that can be used to meet organic certification standards. If someone has gone through the steps to be certified organic, they should be aware of approved practices.

Be a Weed Warrior

Are you doing the very best to protect your land from the invasion of more noxious and invasive weeds? Or are you doing just enough to get by?

Weeds know no boundaries. As good stewards of our land, whether it's a small lawn in town or a 5,000 acre farm/ranch operation, homeowners and landowners must work to keep land free of noxious weeds. If you are persistent and willing to work at noxious weed control as part of your management practice, the diligence will pay off.

Be Careful What You Plant

from preceding page

Most of the plants we grow now are hybrids. The seeds produced from these hybrids don't always resemble their parent plants. It's sad when all your hard work to grow these seeds ends up in growing nothing more than weeds.

Bamboos and ornamental grasses can give an exotic flair to your garden. These plants, while beautiful, are known to be aggressive growers and spreaders. Bamboo is quick growing, spreads by rhizomes and can fill an area quickly. The grasses can live more than one year and spread by both rhizomes and seed. In the past, our cold Nebraska winters have limited these plants from spreading too much. Use caution and monitor these plants if you feel the need to experiment with them.

Over the past few decades, two things have changed that could make our state much more hospitable to these fast growers. First, the USDA has changed the hardiness zones, reflecting that our winters are not as cold as they used to be. Plants that never could survive here, can now thrive here. The second thing happening is new plants are being developed or discovered which are more tolerant to our cold winters than they used to be.

Keep in mind, 3 of Nebraska's 12 State Noxious Weeds were first introduced to homeowners as ornamental plants: Purple loosestrife, Saltcedar and Japanese knotweed. These eventually escaped cultivation, requiring them to be declared noxious and control is now mandatory.

If you see your new plants are spreading out of control, please contact your county weed superintendent for assistance to prevent a breakout of an unwanted pest.

TAKE 2

Two minutes to **read about** two invasive plants which are working to establish themselves in Lancaster County

Lancaster County Weed Control



St. Johnswort
(*Hypericum perforatum* L.)

St. Johnswort is sometimes an invasive plant that originally came from Europe. It is a flowering, herbaceous perennial plant with extensive, creeping rhizomes. It prefers sandy soils and is found in central and eastern Great Plains and scattered westward in prairies, pastures and disturbed fields.

St. Johnswort can be identified by the leaves and flowers. The leaves have distinctive scattered translucent dots. The dots are conspicuous when held up to the light, giving the leaves the “perforated” appearance. The flowers are orangish-yellow, with five petals with conspicuous black dots. The flowering is June through August.

St. Johnswort reproduces by rhizomes and seeds that can persist for decades in the soil seed bank, germinating following disturbance. Like many other invasive plants, the seeds can



also be spread by wildlife, livestock and machinery. Seeds are eaten by mourning doves and quail.

In pastures, St Johnswort acts as both a toxic and invasive weed. It replaces native plant communities and forage vegetation to the extent of making productive land nonviable, becoming an invasive species in natural habitats and ecosystems. It is listed as a noxious weed in more than twenty countries and is considered toxic to some livestock. Ingestion by horses, sheep and cattle can cause photosensitization, central nervous system depression, spontaneous abortion or death.

St. Johnswort is on Nebraska's Watch List and its spread being monitored. It is very prevalent throughout Lancaster County.

For help with identification or control recommendations, contact your local county weed control superintendent.



Sulphur Cinquefoil
(*Potentilla recta* L.)

Sulphur cinquefoil is an invasive weed that originally came from Europe. It was often planted in flower beds because of its attractive flower. This member of the rose family is a very drought-resistant, winter-hardy perennial that prefers full sun light. It grows best in well-drained or sandy soil and is found growing in pastures, hay meadows, roadsides, yards and around building sites.

Sulphur cinquefoil can be identified by the leaves and flowers. The leaves are similar to strawberry leaves and are divided into five or seven leaflets, with triangular teeth on the margins. The flowers are pale sulphur yellow, with five heart-shaped petals and a bright yellow center. The flowering period is from May through July.



Sulphur cinquefoil reproduces mostly by seed. Although the seeds are only viable for approximately two years, one plant can produce up to 1600 seeds. Mature sulphur cinquefoil plants can live up to 20 years as new shoots emerge from the mother plant. Like many other invasive plants, the seeds can also be spread by wildlife, livestock and machinery.

Sulphur cinquefoil was added to the Nebraska Watch List in 2009. We have found it to be very prevalent throughout Lancaster County. Watch for this invader on your property.

For help with identification or for recommendations for control, contact your local county weed control superintendent.

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.



Musk Thistle
Height 1.6–9.8 ft

Pink to purple flowers
Mature seedhead

Canada Thistle
Height 1–3.9 ft

Pink to purple flowers

Plumeless Thistle
Height 1–4.9 ft

Purple flowers

Phragmites
Height 3.2–20 ft

Young seedhead
Mature seedhead

Leafy Spurge
Height .3–2.6 ft

Large yellow leaves (bracts)
Stems/leaves have milky sap

Sericea Lespedeza
Height 1.5–6.5 ft

White or cream to yellowish white flowers

Japanese Knotweed
Height 3–10 ft

Creamy white to greenish white flowers

Giant Knotweed
Height 8–13 ft

Creamy white to greenish white flowers

Purple Loosestrife
Height 1.3–8 ft

Purple to magenta flowers

Saltcedar
Height 3.3–20 ft

Pink to white flowers

Spotted Knapweed
Height 1–3.9 ft

Lavender to purple flowers

Diffuse Knapweed
Height 1–3.9 ft

White/purplish flowers

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.

Lancaster County's Noxious Weeds

Cutleaf Teasel
Height 4–8 ft

White flowers

Common Teasel
Height 3–6 ft

Lavender to white flowers

WEED AWARENESS

The County Commissioners serve as the Lancaster County Weed Control Authority. Currently Brent Meyer serves as the superintendent and supervises a seasonal staff of six weed inspectors with the assistance of Chief Inspector Pat Dugan and Account Clerk Danni McGown.

Thankful and Grateful

Sheridan County Weed Control

Following the extensive flooding in Nebraska this spring, hundreds of kind people from across the U.S. stepped up to help flood victims in many ways. So many kind gestures and generous donations arrived from around the country, in the form of funds, food, hay and other supplies.

Although we are immensely grateful for all donations, we must also be cautious. Following the 2012 drought in Nebraska, a new invasive plant began appearing: absinth wormwood. We suspect this invasive plant came in on hay that was delivered from out of state. Since 2014, we have identified absinth wormwood in over 20 Nebraska counties. County Weed Superintendents across the state have been educated about

absinth wormwood and work to control it. It is often found on roadsides, in corrals, around farm buildings, or anywhere infested hay was stored or fed. Using early detection and rapid response, we hope to keep this invasive plant from becoming a big problem.

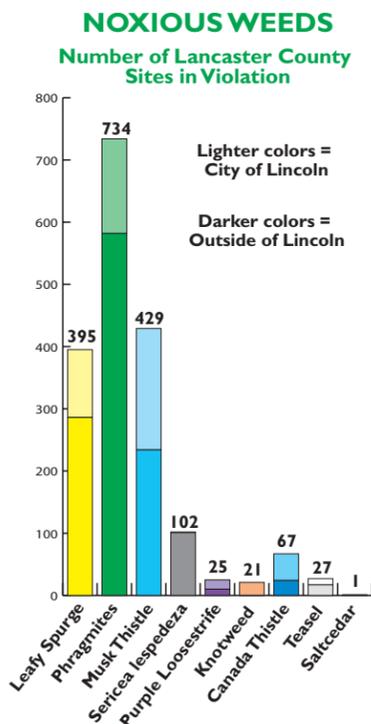
No one knows what plant parts, seeds or weeds may have moved down stream across county lines and state lines in the water, ice and dirt, as well as loads and loads of hay brought from out of state. Be on the lookout for new or unusual plants on your property for the next several years. Since these shipments came from different states, Weed Superintendents are unsure what species might be considered invasive in the states from where the hay was delivered. So along with being thankful and grateful, please be aware of plants out of place.



Lancaster County Weed Control 2019 Review

Lancaster County Weed Control

The Lancaster County Noxious Weed Control Authority serves the citizens of Lancaster County to protect effectively against designated noxious weeds which constitute a present threat to the continued economic and environmental value of lands in Lancaster County. Our office implements the mandates of the State of Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act, known as Title 25, Chapter 10, by setting forth management objectives and plans, methods or practices which utilize a variety of techniques for the integrated management of noxious weeds. In establishing a coordinated program for the integrated management of noxious weeds, it is the Weed Control Authority's intent to encourage and require all appropriate and available management methods, while promoting those methods which are the most environmentally benign and which are practical and economically feasible.

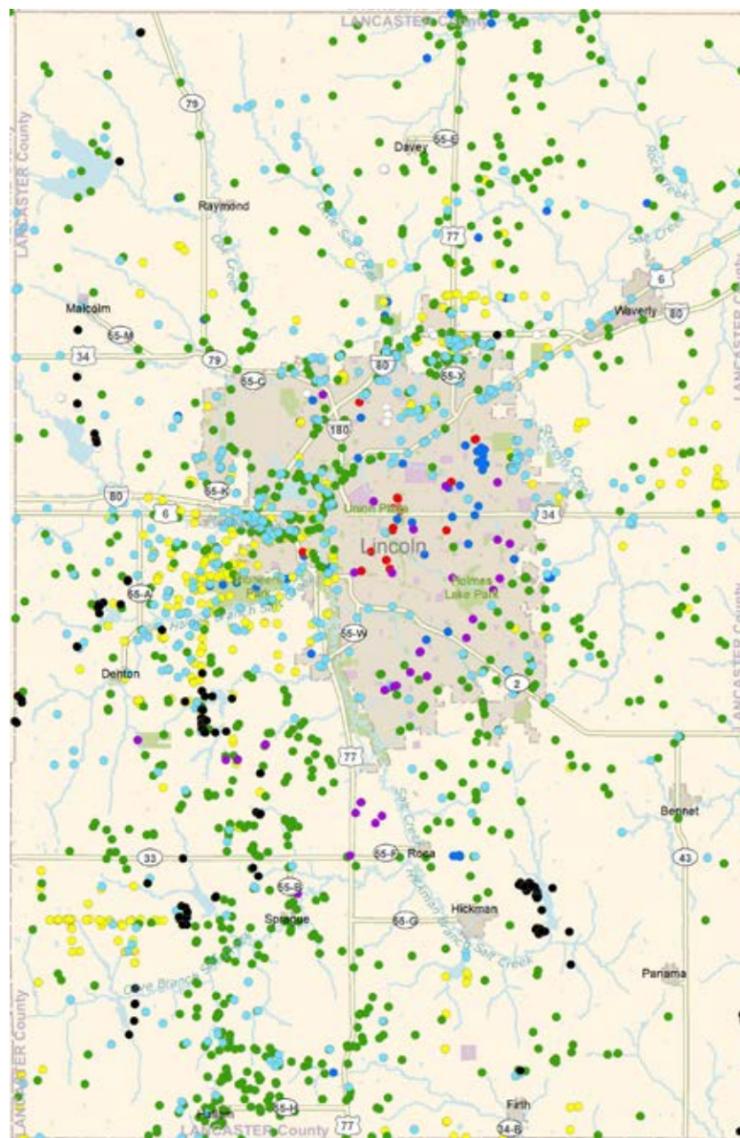


including mechanical, cultural, chemical and biological.

Noxious Weeds in County Roadsides

Landowners are encouraged to control noxious weeds along property they own. If not controlled by the adjacent owner, Lancaster County Weed Control will control the perennial noxious weeds such as phragmites, sericea lespedeza and leafy spurge in the county roadsides. A GPS point is recorded for each noxious weed location, making it very easy to find when the time is right to do the application.

Lancaster County works closely with landowners with specialty crops and offers free-of-charge "NO SPRAY ZONE" signs when an agreement is signed. The agreement requires the landowner to control all the noxious weeds in their adjacent right of way.



Lancaster County Noxious Weeds

- Musk thistle
- Phragmites
- Leafy spurge
- Sericea lespedeza
- Purple loosestrife
- Knotweed
- Canada thistle
- Saltcedar
- Teasel

City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program

Lancaster County Weed Control Authority is responsible to carry out the administration of the City of Lincoln's Weed Abatement program since entering into an interlocal agreement with the city in 1996.

The City of Lincoln's Weed Abatement Ordinance 8.46 requires landowners within city limits to maintain the height of weeds and worthless vegetation

below six inches. This includes all areas to the center of the street and/or alley that adjoins their property. Three seasonal inspectors assist in administering this program. The seasonal employees complete inspections based on pre-selected properties due to their history, complaints from the public that are received in our office and by observing severe yards while conducting other inspections.

In 2019, the Weed Control Authority received 3,155 complaints from the public and additional 366 properties were

observed as having violations. Our office made 8,126 initial and follow-up inspections on 3,521 sites. When a property is found to be in violation, the owner of record is notified with a legal notice sent by certified U.S. mail to the last known legal address obtained from the Lancaster County Assessor's office. If the property remains uncontrolled at the expiration of the legal notice the Weed Control Authority will hire a contractor to cut the property. Our office carried out enforcement on 272 properties in 2019.

Landowners are responsible to pay the cost of control plus an administrative fee. If the cost of control remains unpaid, a lien is placed against the property until paid.

City Landfills

The Weed Control Authority is responsible for managing noxious weeds at the 48th Street and the Bluff Road landfills. Presently, we treat the infestations of musk thistle and leafy spurge at both landfills and phragmites at the 48th Street landfill. The landfills are annually inspected and mapped prior to treatment. This helps to keep track of the spread of noxious weeds and the effectiveness of the control.

Lancaster County Abandoned Cemeteries

Mowing and general maintenance on six abandoned cemeteries throughout the county falls under the supervision of the Weed Control Authority. Cemeteries included are the County Poor Farm, Dietz, Evangelical, Highland Precinct, Jordan and Uphoff.

Special recognition goes to the following volunteers:

- Lincoln Tree Service for tree trimming and removal.
- Dave Miller for mowing Jordan.
- Terry Briley for mowing Evangelical.
- Clark Liesveld and Boy Scouts of America Troop 64 for mowing Dietz.
- Troy Henning for mowing Highland Precinct and Uphoff.