



If not managed, your property could be a source of weeds that cause problems for you and your neighbors. Allowing weeds to grow unchecked on your property is a recipe for disaster.

What is a Weed?

Almost any plant may be considered a weed if it grows in an unwanted place. The most problematic weeds are invasive and non-native. All non-native plants do not become invasive. Invasive, non-native weeds reproduce rapidly and aggressively invade areas traditionally inhabited by native vegetation. Weeds can out-compete native plants because they have no natural competitors to keep their population in check. Some winter-annual weeds, such as cheat grass and medusahead rye, grow when other plants are not yet growing.

Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds are plants that have been legally designated by the state or county as serious pests because they are injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife or public and private property. Noxious weeds have become one of the largest ecological and economic threats to the State of Oregon and Deschutes County.

Invasive noxious weeds annually cost Oregonians over \$120 million due to economic loss to agriculture, natural resources and recreational activities.

Why Care About Invasive Weeds?

Our ecosystems rely on the native vegetation that makes up the foundation of the food chain. When weeds displace desirable plants, they can permanently alter our natural environment and diminish the available food and cover for native wildlife. Weedy areas are also prone to soil erosion from wind and rain. Weeds can also reduce the economic viability of our community's farms and ranches.

Preventing Weed Growth

Prevention is the most effective and least costly form of weed control. Good management practices can help maintain desirable vegetation. Sound practices include purchasing weed-free hay and birdseed, avoiding over grazing, planting certified grass seed; and washing vehicles, waders, boots and clothing after being in a weed-infested area. Early detection and rapid response to weed infestations is very beneficial in preventing weed growth.

Managing Weeds

A stand of healthy, desirable plants is the most effective weapon against weeds. Weeds are opportunists that use available resources to spread. Disturbing soil and removing or suppressing established vegetation creates opportunities for weeds. Foot traffic, wheel traffic and cultivation disturb soil, while excessive mowing, grazing or fire can suppress established vegetation. Land used for high-traffic activities requires extra efforts to manage weeds.

Herbicides can be an effective, necessary and environmentally sound tool to manage weeds. Selective herbicides can control broadleaf plants without injuring grasses. Selective herbicides are particularly effective when used to reduce competition from weeds with desirable plants.

- Cost-share options to help treat selected species and a support network to help manage these species are available through the Deschutes County Weed Board. Contact the Deschutes County Vegetation Manager for more information.
- OSU Extension Service has brochures to aid in plant identification. Staff can suggest plants to replace noxious species and herbicides and other control methods.
- Neighbors are often a good source for identifying noxious weed problems on prospective property. Let neighbors know that you care and are actively managing your property.