



BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

1500 Hwy 2, Suite 101 • Sandpoint, ID 83864 • Phone: (208) 255-5681 ext.6
<https://www.bonnercountyid.gov/noxious-weeds>

Weed of the Month

By Chase Youngdahl, *Bonner County Weeds Manager*

What a difference a year makes. By this time last year, we had already reached 90 degrees and the lake was at a temperature suitable for getting in without enduring heart palpitations. This year we're having trouble breaking the 70 degree mark with any consistency, and we're lucky to find a sliver of an opportunity between rains to mow the lawn before it turns into a jungle. Spraying weeds has also been an exercise in threading the needle with the weather. On the plus side, we are on track for suitable hay production, which is important coming off a drought year where yields were about $\frac{1}{3}$ (at best) of normal production. Actually, way less than that if you take into account the lack of an opportunity for second cuttings. The weather also affects weeds; some are cyclical with either uncharacteristically hot & dry or uncharacteristically cold & wet conditions. I have seen Rush Skeletonweed, for example, appear in parts of the county not previously detected during above average hot & dry years. A year like this, the weeds that thrive in wetter and/or cooler environments come to the forefront, while the ones that thrive in the opposite conditions are prone to a downward cycle.

Redstem Filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), while well adept to a variety of climates, seems to favor conditions that we have had so far this year. It originated in Eurasia, but has been in North America since the 1700s. It's not an Idaho noxious weed—the only western state where it is listed is Colorado. In the Geranium family, Redstem Filaree is a winter annual with growth habits that can be either prostrate or upright. The leaves are divided into feather-like lobes and have a hairy surface, as do the stems. Flowers are varying shades of pink with 5 petals per stalk. Beak-shaped fruiting bodies develop near the end of their lifecycle that resemble a stork's bill, which surprisingly (not) happens to be another common name. Since it has been so cold this spring, the winter annuals are developing later than average—they are typically fully flowered in May, but most are reaching full flowering in June this year. You may have been noticing scattered seas of pink throughout the area; it could be Redstem Filaree. The abundance of rainfall, which it relies on for germination, has spurred bumper crops. It usually doesn't cause much of a problem, but it is an opportunist. If it can seize a void intended for something else, it will. There is capability for taking over gardens, lawns, orchards and agricultural crops.



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It's not poisonous to livestock, so no worries with it being in a pasture or hay field, in reasonable amounts. If it is crowding out a resource(s) that's more valuable to you, a number of chemistries can control it for taking the herbicide route. The use site is what will steer you towards one product or another. If treating a lawn, a turf labeled 2,4-D + dicamba product (Trimec®, etc.) would be a good option. A glyphosate product would be the way to go for treating any encroachments of it in the vacant portions of a garden, or any site where bare ground is the desired result. Metsulfuron (Escort® or generics) or chlorsulfuron (TelarXP®) combined with 2,4-D and a surfactant is highly effective if the use site is appropriate—those chemistries contribute some pre-emergent qualities if beating back a seed bank is part of the strategy. Refer to the labels, and I can assist with label interpretation if needed. Mechanical control is effective; cutting it prior to fruiting will prevent seed production. Being that it can exhibit a sprawling growth habit, it might flower/fruit beneath your mower blades, so taking a string trimmer to it may be necessary. Since Redstem Filaree is an annual, it can't regenerate vegetatively, so the mechanical management plan should be oriented around preventing seed production.

To bring weed control and weather full circle, certain herbicides behave differently in cooler versus hotter weather. Metsulfuron (Escort®, etc.) may cause injury or stunting to grasses when temperatures are consistently in the 80s or above. Chlorsulfuron (Telar®) covers the same spectrum of weeds (for the most part) as metsulfuron and is friendlier to grasses in hot weather, but—it's about ten times the cost. Right now is a good opportunity to take advantage of the conditions for those cost savings. Other herbicides are susceptible to volatilization in heat; Crossbow® and LV4 products being the most vulnerable to it. Crossbow® is commonly used for broadleaf weed control due to its versatility, and these cool conditions make for an environment fit to use it safely. But for all I know, as soon as we hit July it could shoot up to 90 degrees and stay there all summer—which would blow a hole through this entire bit. But, I hope most would agree that a spell of hotter and drier conditions would be welcomed with open arms at this point!