



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 Noxious Weeds*

For all practical purposes, March is too early to do much outside, yet it's typically sprinkled with a couple of nice spring teaser days that seem to get whisked away by the usual jet stream of the northwest nearly as soon as they show up. Early spring is always a test of patience. My department sees a noticeable uptick in customer calls once March arrives, with folks eager to start on weed control projects ASAP. Generally speaking, prior to mid-late April is too early for your run of the mill noxious & invasive weeds—Knapweeds, Thistles, Hawkweeds, Common Tansy, Red Sorrel, Vetch, etc. However, early treatments can be performed in certain circumstances with the proper approach. One such circumstance being bareground applications, involving the use of pre-emergent herbicides. Since the objective with pre-emergent situations is to take care of the issue before you see it, early spring can be the time for action, primarily when bare ground is the desired result. There's too many herbicide possibilities and combinations to rattle off just speaking generally about the topic, but you can contact me with your specific scenario and I can help guide you through some options. Potential use sites include Christmas tree farms, gravel parking lots, utility areas and certain site prep. Another circumstance for early season activities is the treatment of winter annual weeds. Winter annuals germinate the previous fall, so they're vegetatively present by the time the landscape is clear of snow, and ready to bolt before much else. Temperatures are always a wild card, and they play a role in the speed at which vegetation develops, but the factor that remains consistent from year to year is daylight. The gains in daylight near the equinox accelerate rapidly, which contributes to plant development—often just enough to entice winter annuals to start reaching for the sky.

Among the first winter annuals that can be spotted on the early spring landscape is Purple Deadnettle (*Lamium purpureum*). It's one of those nuisance weeds that doesn't usually cause serious issues, but can interfere with turf management and gardening. It's in the mint family, and can be identified by its square stems (an attribute unique to the family) and leaf structure/color. The leaf petioles are longer than the actual leaves towards the bottom of the stem, then the leaves cluster together at the top of the stem, where they taper into a shade of purple. Petioles are the structure that join leaf to stem.



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The flowers are two-lipped, about half an inch long and purplish-pink in color. I think of Purple Deadnettle as a Disney weed, being that I have always seen it as what a real version of an Alice in Wonderland character might look like.

Control of Purple Deadnettle is generally not difficult to achieve. You're apt to find it in landscape beds, where it can be extracted by hand, or simply cut, since it's an annual and cannot regenerate from roots. If it's in your lawn, especially a robust population, a turf labeled herbicide application is the ideal way to go. Some effective herbicides for selective weed control in turf include Trimec® (2,4-D + Dicamba), Foundation® (2,4-D + Triclopyr + Dicamba + Sulfentrazone) and TripletSF® (2,4-D + MCPP + Dicamba). There are others, but these come to mind as far as being readily available to end users. Most will have the same or similar combination of active ingredients. Crossbow® (Triclopyr + 2,4-D ester) is also an option if you are indeed looking to make a treatment happen as soon as possible in the spring. The ester formulated 2,4-D generates more activity in the plants when temperatures are still cool. For control in the garden, the ideal method is either tillage or mulching. Mulching can be achieved with either natural or artificial materials. Natural materials include straw, bark, grass clippings and leaves—which needs to be maintained at minimum depths of 3 - 4 inches in order to prevent sunlight from being able to do its part in the germination and propagation of weeds. Artificial mulching includes plastic sheeting and landscape cloth.

Disney weeds this month, back to noxious weeds for the next.