



BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

- 521 S. Division Ave, Suite 216 • Sandpoint, ID 83864
- Phone: (208) 255-5681 ext.6 • Email: chase.youngdahl@bonnercountyid.gov
- Website: <https://www.bonnercountyid.gov/noxious-weeds>

Weed of the Month

By Chase Youngdahl—*Director, Bonner County Noxious Weeds*

It will be March when this lands in most of your mailboxes, and we are gaining gobs of daylight as we barrel towards the spring equinox. Jumping an hour ahead to Daylight Time is just a couple weeks away, which makes spring feel even closer. There is seemingly a lot of disdain for the seasonal clock changes, but I prefer it. The reality is—our lives revolve around the clock in the first world, and 4 months of Standard Time with 8 months of Daylight Time aligns the clock to follow most human use patterns with the maximum amount of light available. Permanent Standard Time would put daybreak in the 3AM hour early in the summer, while sunset time would never advance beyond the 7PM hour. Likewise, permanent Daylight Time would put sunrise well into the 8AM hour during much of the winter (9AM hour if you're right over the state line in western Montana). Just some food for thought if you're not a fan of the time change. The big picture benefits are worth the couple days of circadian adjustments, a couple times of year. Of course, that's just my humble opinion. :-)

Even if weather conditions do not reflect spring for a while, the longer days remind us that it's around the corner. Time to start thinking about, and planning for, spring activities. Our department's standing landowner noxious weed compliance assistance programs are still tentatively intact for 2025, which includes the Neighborhood Cooperative Cost Share. The cost share provides an opportunity for some herbicide reimbursement for the treatment of Idaho listed noxious weeds on private property. It's geared to assist with the more widespread species that fall into the category of Containment; such as Spotted Knapweed, Oxeye Daisy, Canada Thistle, Orange/Yellow Hawkweeds and Dalmatian/Yellow Toadflaxes. The program is primarily state funded through a grant process, so we won't know until later in the spring if we're awarded our full request or not (we usually are, but it's not guaranteed from year-to-year). In any case, I plan on making the program applications available by April, and will communicate the status with the landowners who submit the pre-application back to my office. Also part of our landowner compliance assistance strategies, is the EDRR (early detection, rapid response) noxious weed program. With this program, we may provide direct treatments at no charge for new invaders and species that infest a limited amount of ground in Bonner County. EDRR category objectives revolve around eradication. The full list of inventoried noxious weeds in Bonner County, along with the categories and associated management goals, is published on our website. I have featured a few of our EDRR specimens in this column over the years. Now you'll get another!

An Idaho noxious weed that is not currently inventoried in Bonner County is Viper's Bugloss (*Echium vulgare*). Very small, isolated populations have appeared previously, and were promptly destroyed. By default, it's treated as an EDRR when identified. Viper's Bugloss is a biennial or short-lived perennial reaching heights of around 3 feet, culminating in bright blue inflorescence. Some of the key features include rough hairs on the stems and leaves (which are lanceolate shaped), as well as flower heads taking



BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

- 521 S. Division Ave, Suite 216 • Sandpoint, ID 83864
- Phone: (208) 255-5681 ext.6 • Email: chase.youngdahl@bonnercountyid.gov
- Website: <https://www.bonnercountyid.gov/noxious-weeds>

on the shape of a scorpion tail. Additionally, the stems are often flecked with black spots. Viper's Bugloss is a highly competitive, non-native plant, and has become well adept at quickly filling in voids left by cultivation, overgrazing, timber harvesting, general disturbances and fires (among other activities and occurrences). It's also an alkaloid fixer, so it is toxic to horses and cattle.

Keep an eye out for this one, being that infestations are currently inventoried in Kootenai and Shoshone Counties, as well as Sanders County (Montana) and southern portions of our closest Canadian provinces. Seeds could easily hitch a ride here from not too far away. If you want to get an in-person look at Viper's Bugloss, head up the Coeur d'Alene River Road out of Kingston in the summer (just be sure to not track any of it back here!). That's where I first became acquainted with it, while attending a function at the Bumblebee Campground. Based on preferred habitat types for Viper's Bugloss, and common travel routes within the region, it's easy to see how it could really gain a strong foothold across much more of northern Idaho if given the chance. It pays to capitalize on EDRR situations. Check out the accompanying invasion curve, which illustrates time and costs related to invasive species and their relative levels of infestation.