



# BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

1500 Hwy 2, Suite 101 • Sandpoint, ID 83864 • Phone: (208) 255-5681ext.6  
<http://bonnercounty.us/noxious-weeds>

## Weed of the Month

By Chase Youngdahl

Here it is, the month of May and heading directly in to the heart of the growing season. As a general rule of thumb for many of the noxious weeds that landowners deal with in this area, May and June are the prime months for treatment to achieve the most successful control. There are some county resources available to help its residents with weed control; including weed identification, weed management advice, rental equipment for spraying and a program to provide some reimbursement for herbicide use on private property.

If you would like to bring in a specimen for identification, pack the entire plant (roots, stems, flowers, etc.) in to a Ziploc bag with a moist paper towel, label with your name & phone number [or email] and drop it off at the Bonner County Weeds Office. The rental equipment that the county offers is available throughout the summer starting in May on a reservation basis from the following Solid Waste sites: Colburn, Dufort, Clark Fork, Prater Valley and Blanchard. The herbicide reimbursement program, referred to as the Neighborhood Cooperative Program, is available to apply for until May 31<sup>st</sup>. It is primarily funded by grants from the Idaho Department of Agriculture. Contact the Bonner County Weeds Office for more details on any of this, or visit our website [bonnercounty.us/noxious-weeds](http://bonnercounty.us/noxious-weeds).

Weed of the month for May is **Common Tansy** (*Tanacetum vulgare*). This one is not an Idaho state listed noxious weed, however it is a Bonner County listed noxious weed. It is probably in the top 4 or 5 most prolific noxious weeds in the area, and one that our office fields calls about frequently. A semi-woody stemmed perennial that grows 4-6 feet tall and produces flat topped clusters of yellow button-like flowers that generally bloom in June and remain until the first heavy frost. The leaves are fern-like and emit a pungent odor when crushed. The root system is thick and prolific—underground rhizomes (roots) can grow laterally a considerable distance and is the primary mechanism of spread. The capability of spreading by seed certainly exists, although the seeds are relatively heavy and need to be carried away from the plants they fell off of via people, animals or equipment.

Common Tansy is an issue in pastures, roadsides, forest clearings/meadows, stream banks, vacant property, gardens and even urban settings such as parking lots and alleys. It will reduce forage availability in pastures, and while it is not toxic to livestock, it is not palatable. It also tends to be one of the more dominant weeds on roadsides, and it grows tall enough to where it creates visual obstruction. In addition, when the fall frosts kill off the growth the woody stems stay in place and become stiff [like sticks], they can scratch vehicles along the more narrow travel corridors. I have observed this often in alley ways throughout town as well as numerous driveways.



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Hand pulling is feasible on small, localized populations prior to flowering and while the soil is still moist so as to extract all of the roots; mowing is not effective, as it spreads by roots more than seeds, however mowing can be used to reduce litter cover prior to herbicide application. If dealing with a larger area and mechanical control is the desired method for management, cultivate or disc the area at 3 week intervals for the duration of the growing season to exhaust the plant parts and reduce competitiveness for the following season. As far as biological control, there are no insects approved for Common Tansy at this time—it is on the list of ‘hope to haves’ for the future since research efforts were launched in 2006 for this cause. If grazing is a control method that fits with your situation, sheep and goats have been known to consume large quantities of Common Tansy. Effective control using herbicides includes the following: Escort® (or any metsulfuron product) at 1 ounce per acre, Telar® (or any chlorsulfuron product) at 1 ounce per acre, Opensight® (aminopyralid + metsulfuron) at 3 ounces per acre, or Crossbow® (triclopyr + 2,4-D ester) at 2 quarts per acre. It is recommended to use 1 pint per acre of a surfactant along with these herbicides, and apply when the plants are about 12-18 inches tall for the best chance at success. Being that we are in the month of May we are closing in on the prime treatment window, however, if life happens and you can’t get to it during the optimal window you can mow it at any point during the growing season and apply once the plants have grown back to about 12 inches. Directions for use may vary between herbicide brands, always read the label. Contact the Bonner County Weeds office if further assistance or advice is needed. The days are getting warmer and longer and the weeds are growing, it’s time to get to work!