



BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

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Weed of the Month

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

In producing these articles, I often get pretty granular with specific weed treatments, environmental/weather scenarios, policies, rules and laws. Those are important focus areas, but in an effort to mix it up, this one will attempt to cover the fundamentals of spraying techniques, along with some planning tips. A ‘back to the basics’ approach, if you will.

Determine the scope of your problem. Start with an inventory of the weeds present, and prioritize treatments based on state listed noxious weeds first (statutory obligation), then nuisance weeds that are interfering with your land management objectives second. Additionally, prioritize production areas where resources are being degraded, i.e. – active livestock pastures and crop production grounds (hay fields, orchards, wildlife feed plots, etc.). The next tier of prioritization should be areas where risk of spread is enhanced—such as roads, driveways, trails and other access points, as well as regularly used animal movement corridors. The final tier of prioritization would be angling towards a ‘weed free’ strategy, where you target leading edges, fallow ground and remote corners of your property. In terms of the actual treatment, an integrated approach falls in line with best management practices—which includes mechanical, chemical, biological (if available) and cultural control methods. When it comes to chemical treatments involving the use of herbicides, you need to determine if your situation calls for boom spraying or hand spraying—among other considerations, but for the purposes of actual spraying performance, those are the considerations at hand. In either case, you need to be calibrated in order deliver an accurate spraying solution. It can be difficult to explain that process in a comprehensive, understandable manner in writing or over the phone, so I may be able to assist you with a site visit in order to get your application equipment calibrated. If you rent one of our 150-200 gallon trailer sprayers, they are pre-calibrated to apply 40 gallons per acre of spraying solution when utilizing the broadcast booms (they’re actually boomless nozzles) at a set speed. For most of the machines, the speed is 3-4 MPH, and is provided on an info sheet that you should receive at check out. These rental sprayers are also equipped with a hand gun attached to 50 feet of hose for spot treatments. Hand spraying needs to be carried out methodically in order to be successful. It’s a natural reaction to see weeds just beyond the reach of where you’re currently working, and to move to that area before you have completed the patch at hand. Then you see weeds just beyond THAT area, which you move towards—again, before covering everything that’s needed. It leads to coverage gaps across the whole area, which results in an incomplete treatment. Everyone does it from time to time, even experienced applicators, which is why it’s important to be conscious of technique. Practice with dyed water and pin flags. Stake out groupings of pin flags throughout a field or yard to simulate a scattered target weed, and do not move to the next grouping of flags until all of them in the given grouping has been dyed. If you need to cover a solid area with a hand spraying apparatus—a lawn,



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for instance—work in a serpentine pattern. Also take care to fully wet the entire area—approach it as if you’re spray painting the ground. When it comes to boom spraying, the most common error is leaving untreated strips, which is a result of taking the passes a bit too wide and/or not traversing in a straight enough fashion. You want to shoot for a slight swath overlap on each pass to avoid untreated strips. Use fence posts, trees or other landmarks as sightlines in order to help guide your passes.

Hopefully this content will help set you up for success with your management endeavors.

My first installment for this publication was released in January 2017, and it featured Orange Hawkweed. That was a lot of grey hairs ago, so I’m going to spotlight a close relative. **Yellow Hawkweed** (*Hieracium caespitosum*) is part of the Meadow Hawkweed complex, and is also on the Idaho Noxious Weed List. It’s an herbaceous perennial with the same overall structure as its orange counterpart. The flower clusters are a touch smaller and the stems are somewhat taller. The flowering period in our area typically occurs in the month of June, and it spends a relatively short amount of time in that stage. Rule of thumb; when you see Hawkweed flowers in their full glory, that’s roughly your two week notice until the blooms give way to spheres of seed. The seeds are very lightweight, as are the small, attached parachutes—allowing them to move in the wind. Sometimes they will travel for over a mile if nothing gets in their way. Between the seed dispersal and the vegetative propagation (rhizomes AND stolons), Hawkweed spreads like a wildfire. It can quickly degrade pastures, choke out crops, drive out native species in a number of habitats and render landscapes a complete monoculture.

We’re at the front end of the management window for the Hawkweed complex. Don’t hesitate to get a hold of me at the Noxious Weeds office to discuss site specific treatment options.