



## 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*

Nearing the end of fall comes time to check off the last remaining boxes on the list of winter prep chores. I have found that proper winterization of herbicide application equipment is a sometimes overlooked task. Whether your equipment is stored in a climate controlled shop, or in a 1920s shed where you can see daylight through the walls (ahem...like mine), it should be put to bed the same way to ensure full lifespan potential. At the conclusion of all weeds spraying activities for the season (which we've passed for the most part, but more on that later), the sprayer tanks should be rinsed with a baking soda solution. Baking soda is a cheap neutralizer, and it doesn't take much to do the trick. Run this mix through the nozzle(s) after giving the tank itself a good once-over with a hose. Next, remove the filter, if applicable to your apparatus. Finally, run a little bit of RV antifreeze through the pump. This final step can be viewed as unnecessary if stored in an area that stays above freezing, but it's still important since it also serves as a lubricant for pump parts—especially diaphragm pumps on ATV sprayers and roller pumps on PTO-driven tractor sprayers. It can be done with regular antifreeze if that's what you have, but I prefer RV antifreeze since it can be safely put on the ground during the process.

Weed of the Month is **Bull Thistle** (*Cirsium vulgare*). It's one of a few invasive thistles that we have around here, but has not landed on the Idaho noxious weed list since it's well established in most of the state with little to no chance of eradication. It is an invasive of concern in Bonner County, and one that we target on our properties due to its consistently competitive nature in areas most vulnerable to our county's growers. Bull Thistle is usually among the initial batch of weeds that populates fresh wildfire burns, as well as recently logged areas (along with Canada Thistle and Common Mullein). It can also be found in other disturbed areas, as well as pastures, turf, roadsides and natural areas. You can distinguish the mature plants by the numerous branches and gnarly, almost spear-like spiny leaves. That's how you can tell it apart from Canada Thistle. The Canadian variety has less intense spines, and bolts in more uniform fashion, rather than in the chaotic fashion exhibited by its rival cousin. The flower heads are another identity clue. Bull Thistle produces spiny bulbs at the tips of the stems that range from 1-2 inches in diameter, and give way to magenta colored flowers. Canada Thistle seed heads are closer in resemblance as far as size, structure and color to that of Spotted Knapweed. Both produce windborne seed, but Bull Thistle seeds disburse nowhere near as far as Canada Thistle.



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I chose to feature this one in the November issue since turf is just about the only use site left with a weed control window for the year. Bull Thistle is more common than you might think in lawns, it just never gets a chance to really bolt and develop due to regular mowing. Check out the seedling in the accompanying photo—they're somewhat oblong with pronounced veins and pimples (ha, yes, we are still talking about thistle). They develop out of seemingly nowhere, and are initially obscure enough to where the discovery often takes place when stepped on barefoot.

It's always tough to predict if conditions will cooperate at this point, but assuming the ground isn't frozen solid and not completely blanketed with snow, you can still perform an herbicide treatment on your lawn with success. Weeds in turf generally stay receptive to treatments until the conditions that I just mentioned set in. Trimec® (2,4-D + dicamba) or Foundation® (2,4-D + triclopyr + dicamba + sulfentrazone) will take out Bull Thistle, along with many nuisance weeds that invade turf. Performing this treatment in conjunction with a fall blend fertilizer application helps strengthen the roots of the turf grasses. If the window is missed, applying a ready-to-use granular herbicide/fertilizer combo product (Weed'n'Feeds) helps with an initial knockdown of the weeds, and can be applied in nearly any condition, including on top of the snow.

Happy Thanksgiving and Novembrrrrr!