



# 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

Heading in to the fall, strategies change for controlling [some] weeds. Knowing what you're dealing with is the key, and as always, the Bonner County Noxious Weeds office is here to assist with weeds identification and management advice. Also, if you are a participant in the Neighborhood Cooperative program (landowner herbicide reimbursement) and have not turned in your spray report and herbicide/surfactant receipts to our office or your group coordinator, please do so right away! If you are not familiar with this program, we receive grant funds from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture to provide some financial assistance to residents in Bonner County for herbicide costs associated with controlling noxious weeds on private property. Call my office anytime for more details, or call next spring to inquire about an application packet if you would like to utilize this program.

Weed of the month for September is Coast fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*). It is not a noxious weed in the state of Idaho or Bonner County, but it is a non-desirable/poisonous native. It's an annual, usually a summer annual—completing its entire life cycle in one year. A summer annual germinates during the spring or early summer, bolts and flowers later in the summer, goes to seed and dies in the fall. Coast fiddleneck is a native of western North America, and can be found in full bloom right now, at least in Bonner County...it is capable of a winter annual lifestyle where it sets seed and starts germinating in the fall, lays dormant throughout the winter, resumes germination in the spring and flowers by summer. When it lives its life as a winter annual it usually lives until late summer or early fall, longer than a typical winter annual (a plant that lives solely as a winter annual sets seed and dies in early summer). There are several different species within the genus of *Amsinckia*, but Coast fiddleneck is the one most often reported in this area. It is a slender forb that reaches 8-30 inches tall and produces a flowering head that curls like the neck of a fiddle, the flowers are yellow and coil along one side of the inflorescence (flowering head). Another key characteristic is the bristly hairs on the stems, leaves and flower head—these hairs are more harsh than hairs on Hawkweed stems but not as bad as thistle spines.

Coast fiddleneck can be found in pastures, grasslands, roadsides, orchards and crop areas. Generally it's not too invasive but it is toxic to livestock, and most poisonings occur from contaminated feed. I receive a few samples submitted to me for identification every season that turn out to be Coast fiddleneck showing up in a hay field, which is what prompted me to select this particular weed for this installment. Toxicity is not likely from grazing due to the poor palatability, livestock will usually avoid consuming it unless there is nothing else available to them. Keeping fiddlenecks out of hay should be the goal.



## BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

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

Since it is an annual it spreads only by seed, which creates more flexibility for effective treatment options. Mechanical control is effective; hand pulling works well if the infestation is small enough to be feasible, and mowing before seed production will keep the plants controlled until they die off in the summer or fall. Tillage also works well to achieve stopping seed production for the season but usually only works [logistically] in crop areas— rough terrain areas like ranges and pastures, etc., may not be possible. Cultural control of Coast fiddleneck is a great option, and since it's an opportunist more than an aggressive invader, cultural control is a strategy that may work well for you. A fertilizer regiment to keep the grasses healthy goes a long way in helping to outcompete fiddlenecks (and many other weeds/noxious weeds as well). A good all-around fertilizer blend to use is 16-16-16 since the soils in most of Bonner County are commonly short on all 3 primary elements (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium)—an application made first thing in the spring, followed by a mid-summer application, and an application late in the fall is a recipe for a thriving stand of pasture grasses. There are two different strategies for control with herbicides; since Coast fiddleneck is an annual it will die before the season is over anyway, so one option is to use a 2,4-D product or Weedmaster® (2,4-D + Dicamba) as early in its development as possible to get rid of what's there for the remainder of the season. Another option is to use Milestone® (Aminopyralid) or Opensight® (Aminopyralid + Metsulfuron) to reduce the seed bank and have the area clean for the following season. Due to the very hairy nature of this weed, a quality silicone or methylated seed oil surfactant is important to maximize control. Always read and follow herbicide product labels. Since Coast fiddleneck is a native to North America, there are no biological control programs established. Summer is winding down, but the weeds treatments don't have to—if you were busy playing on the lake or in the mountains over the summer but still want to kill those pesky weeds, contact my office or your favorite weed control professional for advice and assistance on developing a fall weeds treatment plan.