



BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

1500 Hwy 2, Suite 101 • Sandpoint, ID 83864 • Phone: (208) 255-5681ext.6
<https://www.bonnercountyid.gov/noxious-weeds>

Weed of the Month

By Chase Youngdahl, *Bonner County Weeds Manager*

It sure goes quickly...summer, that is. We're looking into the face of September—already on the doorstep of fall. That's not all bad, as hunting season and football will soon be upon us. It also opens up another window for weed control, as we should have a few good rainfall events under our belt by the end of the month to wake the drought stressed vegetation from its temporary semi-dormancy. Fall can be a great time to get extended control of both noxious weeds and nuisance native weeds in both pasture and turf sites, with certain herbicides. Get in touch with the Bonner County Weeds office to help tailor a fall weed control plan to best suit your situation.

Weed of the month is **Corn Spurry** (*Spergula arvensis*), an interesting specimen in the carnation family. I've had a few samples of this dropped off at my office over the course of this last season (and had it reported to me for the first time three years ago), so I figured I would share it in one of my installments, as it may become more of an issue going into the future for growers. It's an annual from Europe that infests most western states in the US to some degree. It's not a state or county listed noxious weed, just an agricultural nuisance. Identification is relatively easy, especially once you have seen it for the first time; fleshy stems bolt to about 1 foot tall with cord-like leaves arranged in whorls up the stem. Flowers are white and very small, less than a quarter of an inch wide. The flowering phase varies since Corn Spurry can be either a winter annual or summer annual—I've had it reported [and confirmed] as both in Bonner County. Almost reminds me of a submersed aquatic weed that happens to grow on land; that was my first impression.

Generally, Corn Spurry is introduced via contaminated seed; thus it is primarily found in seeded pastures and crop lands. Being an annual, it only spreads by seed, so you're good if you knock it out as soon as it shows up. This one is a pain to deal with—it gets tangled up and clogs mowing and hay harvesting equipment. It also has an unpleasant odor, on top of the fact that it may be toxic to livestock if large amounts are consumed (more apt to happen from contaminated hay due to the weed itself being unpalatable).



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Prevention is the control measure of choice, by far. Actually, prevention is the control measure of choice for all weeds, but it's not always possible with certain weeds having a well-established seedbank across the entire locale. With the cases of Corn Spurry that I've been made aware of, the common denominator is contaminated seed. Know your source! Ask questions when you purchase your crop seeds. If prevention eludes you and it does show up in your crop, there are a couple of options. In a stand of pasture grasses, an herbicide treatment with chlorsulfuron (trade names include Telar®, Glean® and generics) should take care of it. If it came in with a broadleaf seed batch, it may be best to go the mechanical route and start over—work the field as soon as you notice it to make sure it doesn't create a seed bank. Either way, Corn Spurry is an expensive issue if you fall victim to an infestation.

Again, fall is a great time for controlling weeds. Get them out of the way to where the perennial grasses have a head start in the spring—the results are satisfying. I will focus my November installment around a turf weed, as you can make treatments on a lawn up until it's snow covered or frozen solid. That thought was shudder worthy, I'm not ready to even think about snow or ice (unless it's in my glass). Soak up the last remnants of summer!