



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*

There was a comic strip in the 80s & 90s called ‘Calvin & Hobbes’. One such strip illustrated Calvin in a panic about it already being July, that June had slipped away like it was nothing. Calvin’s meltdown concluded by looking at his watch and noting that it was half an hour later than it was half an hour ago and that they needed to hurry to continue on with hoarding summer time! The end of the strip indicates Hobbes thinking to himself that he wasn’t sure he wanted to be around at the end of August (to endure an assuredly frazzled Calvin). I think of this comic strip every summer, as it fits me to a “T”—in a near constant state of hoarding every ounce that can be squeezed out of our short summers. If you’re like me, I feel for you. If you’re the opposite (not a fan of the heat), you’ve got about 9 months of heaven just ahead!

The heavy lifting for this season’s weed control is mostly in the rearview mirror, but another couple months remain for touch-ups and fall specific treatments. Certain agricultural & horticultural situations call for treatments during, or going into dormancy, as do some annual grasses. Broadleaf weeds in turf respond well to fall herbicide treatments in conjunction with a dose of fertilizer. Even general noxious & invasive weed control can be done in the fall if incorporating a product with some pre-emergent qualities, such as Milestone® (aminopyralid). Cultural weed control methods are usually implemented in the fall, where cover crops are planted to tie up the resources on the site until it’s put back into action the following spring or summer. Fall weed treatments can be detail orientated, so I’d be happy to work through a treatment plan with you to help ensure you have the tools to be set up for success.

The Weed of the Month is not specifically related to fall control, but it’s an important one that I need public assistance with; **Small Bugloss (*Anchusa arvensis*)**. This is an Idaho Noxious Weed that’s in the EDRR (early detection, rapid response) category in Bonner County. It’s an annual (summer & winter) in the borage family. The leaves are wavy and covered in bristly, spiny hairs that emerge from wart-like bumps. It bolts to heights of 6”-24” and produces coiled flower stems that put out small, blue-petaled flowers that fade to white near the base. Being that it’s a summer & winter annual, there are varying flushes throughout the year, so the flowering period is from May through September. That helps with achieving a positive I.D. for most of the growing season.



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Although, this specimen has distinct enough looking leaves for it to be correctly identified without the flowers. Just shake its hand, the spiny hairs will greet you!

Small Bugloss was introduced to North America as an ornamental, and became a serious problem in cultivated cropland by rapidly reproducing and outcompeting crops; reducing yields. Each plant produces about 250 seeds with high viability rates. I have confirmed Small Bugloss on only two sites in Bonner County. I'm working with the landowners on both cases for eradication—which should be achievable being that they are both very small patches. I am concerned about existing infestations in the county that have gone unnoticed or unreported, being that the currently known infestations seem to have come in from contaminated hay & straw, locally sourced.

As is the case with all EDRR noxious weeds in Bonner County, we can treat them at no charge to the property owner as part of our eradication plan with state cost sharing funds. If you happen to find perhaps just a plant or two on your property, those can easily be destroyed without assistance from my department, but try to trace how it got there. The source of hay, straw, topsoil or mulching material would be the most suspect. There could potentially be a mother lode out there somewhere—hiding in plain sight—and it could be in materials that are routinely leaving that property. It's an uneasy notion, but hopefully a case that can be solved.