



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*

The dead of winter is always the best time to bolster education. Weed control professionals spend this valuable time immersed in research in order to build up our programs by learning about herbicide & biocontrol developments, new control techniques, new invasive species, grant opportunities, changes to applicable state and federal rules and anything else that comes up. We also provide education to the public via seminars, curriculum based classes, articles and meetings (one-on-one and group settings). This is a great time for landowners to gather new ideas and knowledge, and to use that information in planning your attack for the upcoming field season. Given the nature of where we live, everyone gets busier once the weather turns nice, so off-season preparation is ideal. If weed control action is something that you know your property will need in the coming year, feel free to reach out if you would like assistance developing a plan. You may need herbicide (or other management) recommendations, you may need info on application equipment, you may want to take advantage of cost share assistance...you get the idea. Things like site visits and aid with weed identification obviously needs to wait until the growing season, but the more that can be planned ahead of time, the better. Even if it's just a hand written outline with a few bullet points. I'm always happy to help.

Weed of the month is **Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*)**. This invader is a mat forming annual on the Idaho Noxious Weed List. Puncturevine can be a summer or winter annual that produces several flushes throughout the season if conditions are right. The seeds need warm temperatures to germinate, but they can handle nearly any soil type. Leaves are hairy with an opposite structure and the stems sprawl out, creating mats. The flowers are 5-petaled and pale yellow in color. The fruiting bodies are hard, spiny burs, and they're a pain...literally! It's native to the Mediterranean region and was unintentionally introduced to North America by European settlers. Burs [containing the seeds] hitchhiked over here on sheep wool, which they easily latch on to.



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Given the nature of spread, the little buggers also grab hold on to footwear, clothing, equipment tracks/tires and the fur or feathers of any animal that crosses its path. Puncturevine mostly infests trails, roadsides, parking areas and waste areas—but if it does find its way into a pasture or hay crop, the fruiting bodies can cause oral injuries to livestock. It poses a safety issue with young children and small pets if they get into a nearby patch, in addition to the burs being sharp and rigid enough to puncture bicycle tires. In areas of widespread infestations, it's not uncommon to come across signage alerting cyclists to be vigilant about staying on paved portions of pathways due to Puncturevine; Boise is one of those areas. Luckily, none has been found in Bonner County as of yet, although there is some in Kootenai County. Just last year it was discovered in Boundary County for the first time in an industrial parking lot—contaminated equipment most likely carried it there. Boundary County achieved eradication of the lone infestation at last check. We have it on our EDRR (early detection, rapid response) watch list in Bonner County, as an unfortunate arrival is plausible. We have a lot of new residents arriving from areas where Puncturevine infestation levels are high. Additionally, the peak tourist season coincides with the time of year when many invasive weeds go to seed. All it would take is an outdoor recreationalist getting a bur wedged in the tread of their hiking boots (from as nearby as Spokane or Post Falls), then visiting our area to go for a hike on a popular trail like Gold Hill or Mickinnick for us to have a new issue on our hands with high risk for spread. It's also worth noting that Puncturevine thrives during hot summers, so if we get another one of those...

My primary push is for prevention; use a boot brush between hikes, and wash ATVs & equipment between sites. Let's keep the carpet of thorns out of Bonner County! My next push is for prompt notification if you find, or suspect, an infestation of Puncturevine. A confirmed infestation would automatically be an EDRR situation where my department would put the wheels in motion to get it treated right away.

Spread the word, not the problem.