



BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

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

Weed of the month

By Chase Youngdahl

Noxious weeds in the State of Idaho are grouped in to categories based on the estimated acreages infested, they are as follows in ascending order: level one – Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR), level two – Containment, level three – Control. Bonner County uses the same nomenclature to categorize noxious weeds to suit our locale; the noxious weed issues in Bonner County are not the same as Canyon County [for instance]. We receive grant funds from the State of Idaho to control EDRR noxious weeds at the county level, one of which I am going to present...

Weed of the Month is **Bohemian Knotweed** (*Polygonum X bohemicum*). It is a state listed noxious weed in the Control category, Bonner County has it listed in the [local] EDRR category. It infests a handful of sites throughout the county, but the total acres infested is under 100 and is somewhat habitat specific, thus justifying a case for possible eradication. I will point out that there are two other large Knotweeds, Japanese Knotweed and Giant Knotweed, Bohemian is a hybrid between the two and all three are collectively referred to as the “large Knotweed complex.” The Bohemian version makes up about 90% of the overall large Knotweed population in Bonner County, but the entire complex is treated the same. They are woody, upright perennials with hollow stems and grow up to 12 feet in height—it has been referred to as imitation Bamboo. Bohemian Knotweed specifically has oval-shaped leaves that are about 4 to 10 inches long and about two-thirds as wide that taper to a point. The flowers are white and grow in clusters erect on the stems. Just for comparison’s sake, the flower clusters droop from the stems on Japanese Knotweed.

Bohemian Knotweed likes moist environments and disturbed sites; it can be found along creek banks, riparian areas, waste areas, city alleys, landscapes and residential/commercial properties where recent construction or renovation has taken place. The large Knotweeds were introduced from East Asia as ornamentals and became popular buffer vegetation, in large part due to its tall stature and ease to culture. Reproduction occurs primarily by rhizomes (roots) and nodal portions of the stem—seeds are capable of reproducing new plants as well. The rhizomes are massive and extend their proverbial tentacles out approximately 20 feet from each parent plant. These rhizomes are so aggressive that they are capable of causing destruction to property—they can push sidewalks and paved pathways up (similar to tree roots) and can even break apart home foundations! Destruction aside, Bohemian Knotweed can quickly overtake a landscape and be very difficult to get rid of once established, limiting control options.



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Unless an infestation is caught VERY early, mechanical control is nearly impossible. In the event it is caught very early, dig up the plant(s) and as large of a swath around it as feasible—bag up all plant parts along with the contaminated soil and dispose at a landfill. Cutting and mowing can temporarily suppress it, but will never eliminate it or even slow the spread, and the cutting/mowing intervals need to happen frequently throughout the growing season since the growth is so rapid. If you choose to cut or mow, rake up the plant parts to bag and throw away since the nodes on those plant parts will propagate new colonies. Mulching with plastic or fabric may be the best non-chemical option for some control—but again, the colony needs to be fairly small to achieve any reasonable control since the main enemy is the outrageously large and sprawling root system. Herbicide options include triclopyr products, imazapyr products and aminopyralid (Milestone®), and usually requires repeat applications to exhaust the roots. Triclopyr (Vastlan®) and aminopyralid (Milestone®) are selective herbicides and when tank mixed along with an MSO surfactant provide the best control in situations allowable per the labels. Imazapyr (Polaris®) is a non-selective herbicide [labeled for both terrestrial and aquatic uses] and is often utilized where an application along a creek bank will result in the spray droplets falling directly in to the water. If the stream/creek/river/pond is or leads to a public waterway, it is considered waters of the U.S. and any chemical application within these waters requires a professional applicator and permit coverage through the EPA. One more control option with herbicide involves cutting the plants and administering un-diluted product, localized, in to each stem. The cut stem method is tedious but may be the only viable option in certain landscaping situations where over-spray with a foliar application would damage nearby ornamentals. Labeled products for cut stem treatment of the large Knotweeds include triclopyr and glyphosate chemistries. Feel free to call the Bonner County Weeds office for any additional details on these control methods. However, as I mentioned in the opening paragraph, the State of Idaho provides the counties with grant funds to control their EDRR listed weeds. If you have Bohemian Knotweed (or any of the large Knotweeds) and are interested in taking advantage of this program, contact us to sign an agreement allowing County personnel on to your property to perform an herbicide treatment at no cost—including repeat applications. It would be foliar herbicide applications, so if that fits your situation we would be thrilled to take care of it and hopefully get Bonner County that much closer to eradication status with the large Knotweeds.