



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

By now most windows have closed for treating weeds—perennial turf weeds are an exception. While fall generally inspires activities other than something mundane (and mostly off the radar) like lawn maintenance, perhaps I can make a case for it being a worthwhile endeavor. The precipitation we receive throughout the fall wakes up a lawn from the late summer drought dormancy—at the same time, nutrients are being rapidly sent to the roots for winter dormancy. This set of circumstances opens the treatment window up until the time the landscape is snow covered, or frozen solid, whichever occurs first. If a fall herbicide and concurrent fertilizer application is made to a weed infested lawn, the desired turf grass will come on strong in the spring without the competition of the perennial broadleaf weeds. Contact the Bonner County Weeds office to discuss late fall management options for your turf.

Weed of the Month is **Spotted Cat's Ear** (*Hypochaeris radicata*), a Bonner County listed noxious weed and one that often finds its home in lawns. It's a perennial with Dandelion-like basal leaves and leafless stems that emerge and grow 6-18 inches in height. The flowers [too] resemble what a Dandelion produces—multiple yellow petals making a disk shaped flower head about an inch in diameter. I think of Spotted Cat's Ear as a cross between a Dandelion and a Rush Skeletonweed (it's not an actual hybrid, that's just what it reminds me of from a visual standpoint). The basal leaves have the shape and overall appearance of Dandelion basal leaves, but are rougher and covered with hairs as you would see in a Rush Skeletonweed rosette. The stems have the same features as Rush Skeletonweed being branched and leafless, while the flowers that blossom on top of these leafless stems are nearly identical to that of a Dandelion.

In addition to turf, Spotted Cat's Ear can also be found in pastures, orchards, garden beds, vacant landscapes and on roadsides. It will spread by both seeds and roots, although not in an immensely aggressive fashion by either. The seeds disburse in the wind, but they are very short lived in the soil as compared to most perennial noxious weeds. On the vegetative end, it can reproduce from the root crown, but not reliably from fragments of roots.



BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

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

Control methods for Spotted Cat's Ear include mechanical, cultural and herbicide. For mechanical control, dig the individual plants out with a Dandelion puller or screwdriver [if in turf], or with a small shovel if in a setting where more intrusion is tolerable. Generally, if you dig out most of the roots you'll kill that plant, but being able to extract the entire root is more fail safe. Cultural control is the practice of keeping the surrounding desirables healthy; since water is not really an issue this time of year, fertilizer is your biggest ally in the vein of cultural control. A low nitrogen/high phosphorus and potassium blend is ideal, plants are not using nitrogen right now so a high nitrogen blend would only feed undesirable annuals (weeds & grasses). The more you can strengthen your perennial grasses in the fall, the more they'll be able to outcompete weeds the following spring; and fertilizer can even be applied after some snowfall. Herbicide control options for use in turf includes Trimec Classic® (2,4-D + dicamba), Crossbow® (2,4-D + triclopyr) or Foundation® (2,4-D + triclopyr + dicamba + sulfentrazone). For control in range & pasture, Milestone® (aminopyralid), Opensight® (aminopyralid + metsulfuron), Curtail® (2,4-D + clopyralid) or Telar® (chlorsulfuron) are also effective. Other brand names for some of these active ingredients exist, the front page of the label lists the active ingredient(s). It is the responsibility of anyone making an herbicide application to read the label prior to use.

Since this edition is geared more towards lawns, I'll just throw out there that in comparison to controlling other common turf weeds, I would rate Spotted Cat's Ear as moderate—slightly more difficult than Dandelions or Plantains, but not as stubborn as Chickweed, Wild Violet or Ground Ivy. If a healthy, clean looking lawn appeals to you, go ahead and treat it now! We are still in the treatment window, but not for too much longer. If you need any additional advice or suggestions, reach out to Bonner County Weeds by whichever means of communication suits you best. I'm from the government and I'm here to help. :)