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Introduction

The spread of noxious weeds is a non-fiction alien invasion. Many non-native plants are important to us as crops and ornamentals in our landscapes. Others are harmless or colonize only disturbed habitats where they may sometimes be considered nuisance weeds. Unfortunately, there are a few species that become invasive and spread into natural habitats where they displace native species and degrade wildlife habitat. These are the true noxious weed aliens that ODA fights with a combination of quarantine, survey, eradication, hand-pulling, mowing, herbicide treatments, and biological control. It is a war that requires battles on many fronts and we are lucky to have staunch allies working with us. This booklet describes ODA's Noxious Weed Control Program and provides contact information to help anyone concerned with noxious weeds.

*Daniel J. Hilburn
Administrator, Plant Division*

Plant Division Mission Statement

To exclude, detect, and control or eradicate serious insect pests; to enhance the agricultural value of nursery stock, Christmas trees, seeds and other agricultural products for export through pest and disease inspection and certification; and **to oversee statewide noxious weed control efforts.**



Weed Program

Mission

To protect Oregon's natural resources from the invasion and proliferation of exotic noxious weeds.

Goals

The Noxious Weed Control Program has five primary goals:

- Coordinate statewide noxious weed prevention and control efforts.
- Implement statewide integrated weed management projects with public and private sectors.
- Conduct surveys to detect and delimit invasive noxious weed species.
- Implement and coordinate biological control of weed projects.
- Provide information to cooperators on integrated weed management.

Staff

The weed control program is a section of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Plant Division. The Noxious Weed Control Program has 10 permanent technical staff members located in Salem, Union, Redmond, Klamath Falls, Burns, and Canyonville. The program also employs seasonal staff during the field season.

Program Activities

The Noxious Weed Control Program provide leadership and technical expertise for weed control programs throughout the state. This involves coordinating the weed control efforts of federal, state, and county agencies as well as private landowners. Program staff also conduct weed surveys to detect new infestations and to manage such infestations while they are still small and before they become significant problems, administer county assistance and special project funds appropriated for weed control by the legislature.

ODA staff work closely with the State Weed Control Board to prioritize weed projects. ODA strives to develop and implement biological control programs wherever feasible and to promote the integration of methods of control so as to maximize that effectiveness while reducing environmental impacts.



Definition of a Noxious Weed

Noxious weeds are defined by the Oregon State Weed Board as exotic, non-indigenous, species that are injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife or any public or private property.

Impacts of Weeds on Natural Resources

Noxious weeds are non-indigenous species, often of Eurasian origin, that have been accidentally introduced as contaminants of commodities or are escaped ornamentals: They may be toxic or alleopathic and have detrimental effects on our natural resources.

Non indigenous invasive weed species have been documented to:

- reduce productivity of agronomic, range and forestry systems by displacing desirable species and by capturing and utilizing valuable resources.
- disrupt natural ecosystems by displacing native species; reduce natural diversity by replacing native communities with invasive monotypic weed stands; impact wildlife by altering habitat and watersheds.
- may have detrimental impacts on public health and reduce esthetic and recreation value of our public lands.

Program History

Prior to 1975 only ragweed was under an active statewide control program. The 1975 legislature amended the ragweed law (ORS 452) to include tansy ragwort, a widespread weed of pastures and rangelands in western Oregon that is toxic to cattle and horses. At that time an estimated \$5,000,000 in annual livestock losses in western Oregon were attributed to tansy ragwort poisoning. Due mainly to the effects of two biological control agents, the cinnabar moth and ragwort flea beetle, losses to ragwort poisoning are now negligible.

The weed program has expanded to include other weed projects throughout the state. The ODA Weed Control staff has developed excellent working relationships and cooperative agreements with the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bonneville Power Administration as well as state agencies such as the Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of Transportation. These and other agencies, and the County Weed Control Programs and Districts which operate under ORS 570, have come to rely on the ODA staff for leadership, coordination and technical expertise in weed control efforts. The 1985 legislature created the State Weed Control Board (ORS 561.650) and provided funds for the Board to use on special weed control projects. A 1990 amendment to the Federal Noxious Weed Control Act of 1974 directs that federal agency control efforts be coordinated by state departments of agriculture.

State Weed Board

A seven-member Board, broadly representative of weed control interests in the State, has an appropriation to assist counties in special projects and to help support biological control work. The Board and the ODA weed staff confer in setting statewide priorities for funding of projects. The Board also develops and maintains the State Noxious Weed List.

State Weed Laws (Summary)

Chapter 452 - Vector and Weed Control

452.510–452.590 Ragweed Control

452.610–452.630 Tansy Ragwort Control

Chapter 561 - State Department of Agriculture

561.510–561.600 Quarantine Powers

561.650–561.680 State Weed Board

Chapter 570 - Plants: Inspection, Quarantine, Pest and Weed Control

570.505–570.600 Weed Control

Noxious Weed Quarantine

OAR 603-52-1200

Note: Copies of these laws are available on the web at <http://landru.leg.state.or.us/ors/> or by contacting the Noxious Weed Control Program.

Weed Policy and Classification System Overview

Purpose of the Weed Policy and Classification System

1. Acts as the Department of Agriculture's official guideline for implementing and prioritizing noxious weed control programs.
2. Assists the Department of Agriculture in prioritizing requests for available grant funds.
3. Serves as a model for the private and public sectors in developing noxious weed classification systems.

Criteria for Determining the Economic Significance of a Weed

1. Detrimental Effects
 - a. A plant species that is causing or has the potential of causing severe production losses or increased control costs to the agricultural and/or horticultural industries of this state.
 - b. A plant species that is or has the potential of endangering native flora and fauna by its encroachment in forest and conservation areas.
 - c. A plant species that is or has the potential of hampering the full utilization and enjoyment of recreational areas.
 - d. A plant species that is poisonous, injurious, or otherwise harmful to humans and animals.

2. Plant Reproduction
 - a. A plant species that reproduces by seeds capable of being dispersed over wide areas.
 - b. A plant species that reproduces by tubers, creeping roots, stolons, rhizomes or other natural vegetative means.
3. Difficulty of Control
 - a. A plant species that is not easily controlled with accepted management practices such as chemical, cultural, biological and physical methods.
4. Distribution
 - a. A weed of known economic importance which occurs in the state in small enough infestations to make eradication/containment possible; or not known to occur, but its presence in neighboring states makes future occurrence seem imminent.
 - b. A weed of economic importance and of limited distribution in the state.
 - c. A weed which has not infested the full extent of its potential habitat in the state.



Note: Copies of the official state noxious weed list are available from the Noxious Weed Control Program.

Rating System

Noxious weeds, shall be designated “A”, “B”, and/or “T”, according to the ODA Noxious Weed Rating System.

1. “A” designated weed—a weed of known economic importance which occurs in the state in small enough infestations to make eradication/containment possible; or is not known to occur, but its presence in neighboring states make future occurrence in Oregon seem imminent.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Infestations are subject to intensive control when and where found.

2. “B” designated weed—a weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant, but which may have limited distribution in some counties. Where implementation of a fully-integrated statewide management plan is infeasible, biological control shall be the main control approach (“B” weeds for which biological control agents are available are identified with an asterisk).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Limited to intensive control at the state or county level as determined on a case-by-case basis.

3. “T” designated weed—a priority noxious weed designated by the State Weed Board as a target weed species on which the Department will implement a statewide management plan.

Related Resources

Weed Program Area Offices

Salem - 503-986-4621

Canyonville - 541-839-4385

Klamath Falls - 541-850-9550

Redmond - 541-548-2241

Burns - 541-573-8385

Union - 541-562-5129

Plant Division - 503-986-4644

Commodity Inspection Division - 503-986-4620

Pesticides Division - 503-986-4635

Natural Resources Division - 503-986-4700

(Water issues/Threatened & Endangered Plant Program)

For additional information see
the Noxious Weed Control
Program web site at:
[www.oda.state.or.us/Plant/
PLANTINFO.html](http://www.oda.state.or.us/Plant/PLANTINFO.html)



Note: Upon request we can provide an updated list of other cooperating weed control contacts in the State of Oregon which include County, State, and Federal programs (503-986-4621).