

Blueweed (*Echium vulgare*) was recently just listed by the state as a noxious weed. Mark Porter/Oregon Department of Agriculture



Hoary alyssum can be toxic to horses if baled in their hay. It has been found near Wallowa. Mark Porter/Oregon Department of Agriculture

Vegetation Department gears up for spring

County continues battle against noxious weeds

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — As spring arrives, the Wallowa County Vegetation Department is gearing up to continue the ongoing battle against noxious and invasive weeds in the county.

Vegetation Department Manager Andy Marcum presented the updated 2022 Noxious Weed List to the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners at its meeting Wednesday, March 16.

The weed list consists of 20 species on the “A List,” another 37 on the “B List” and another 58 on a “Target List” and a “Watch List,” some of which are included on multiple lists.

On the lists

Among the most concerning, Marcum said, are three that have been “creeping toward” or are already in Wallowa County.

He said hoary alyssum was found around 2002 near Wallowa at the bottom of Tick Hill. Oregon Department of Agriculture Noxious Program staff monitors and treats this site each year. Last year there were only a few plants left. He said it is deadly toxic to horses when mixed into hay due to their inability to sort it out.

“It’s really hard to find, too,” Marcum told the commissioners. “It blends in well with the bunchgrasses in the areas it grows in.”

Also of concern, he said, are two species of wild roses: sweet briar rose and dog rose. They are prevalent in canyonlands, such as the Imnaha area. They’re easily identifiable, but somewhat difficult to distinguish between the two species.

“They’ve been on the radar for over 20 years,” Marcum said.

Commissioner Todd Nash asked how those rosebushes are controlled. Marcum said usually with a herbicide such as garlon, picloram, triclopyr or even pelletized herbicides that are applied prior to rain, which can then soak down into the roots of the bush. They can also be controlled by digging up the entire root system early on in the plants growth.

Nash also was curious if biological controls, such as livestock, can be used. Marcum said the thorns in rosebushes prevent goats or sheep from eating them to a controllable level.

“They’re just too hard on (the animals),” he said.

Some of the noxious weeds are toxic to livestock, which Wallowa County is full of.

Biocontrols are effective, Marcum said, such as insects.

“We’re beginning to ramp up educating people on the different kinds of herbicide we use,” he said. “It’s not all about spraying Roundup. In fact, we rarely use Roundup in our treatments outside of our right of ways. ... Spraying is part of it, livestock’s part of it, biocontrols are a big part of it — there are more biocontrols that are nearing approval for release in the state of Oregon, which are species of insects that only target specific plants. Knapweed, for example, there are several biocontrols here in the county that are used on knapweed.”

Some of those insects include species of weevils, beetles and flies, he said.

“And there’s more coming down the pipe,” he said. “One issue right now is the state’s ability to grow them fast enough for release throughout the state.”

Educational efforts

Commissioner Chairwoman Susan Roberts asked about Marcum’s educational efforts.

“Are there pictures of these things around?” she asked. “A lot of people go out and they dig up these wonderful-looking things and they bring them to town.”

Marcum said he plans to continue to get photographs of the noxious weeds circulated as part of the department’s education and outreach efforts. In coordination with the Wallowa County Weed Board and Wallowa Resources, a monthly article in the Chieftain, which will highlight a noxious weed of the month, educational letters on various herbicides and noxious weeds to the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce and continued work with Wallowa Resources, SWCD, NRCS, ODA and Oregon State University Extension.

“And as always, if folks are out on a hike, moving cows or even driving down the road and see something suspicious, call any of our local natural resource organizations and report it,” he said.

Marcum noted that the county Weed Board also has added people who are not necessarily noxious weed experts, but are members of the public and vital to have included on the board.

At the March 16 meeting, the commissioners approved the Weed Board’s Annual Plan, the 2022 Noxious Weed List and appointed members to the Weed Board. Some of the members were already on the board.

Appointed or reappointed were Teresa Smergut, Kelly Birkmaier, Marci Schreder, Chris Cunningham, Mike Hale, Joe Sims, Beckijo Smergut, Mike Beachy, Janet Hohmann, Shanda Zettle and Ingrid Cook.

Native vs. Non-native Roses



Interior Rose NATIVE
(*Rosa woodsii* ssp. *ultramontana*)



example of NON-NATIVE rose



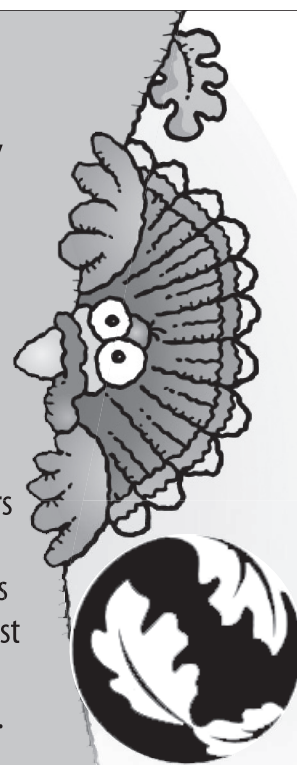
Barbara Ertter/Contributed Photo

Native and nonnative roses appear throughout Wallowa County. The nonnatives are listed both in the state and the county as noxious invaders.

YOUTH TURKEY HUNT

The Nature Conservancy would like to offer a turkey hunting opportunity to the youth of Wallowa County. Two youth hunters will be chosen via random draw. Hunters must be between the ages of 12-17. Chosen youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult (21 yrs or older) during their hunt.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 4/3/22
To sign up for the random draw, email Chad Dotson at chad.dotson@tnc.org



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