

Local & State

Invasive weed of the week

By Jeffrey Pettingill

The enemy

Puncturevine (Tribulus terrestris).

The strategy

This is an annual weed that grows flat on the ground and can form very dense mats up to 15 feet across. This invader from Europe produces yellow flowers every four days. From this flower eight sharply pointed triangular seeds are formed that give this seed head the nickname of goathead. It starts growing in June and remains viable until the first frost if not controlled.

Attack

This plant does not like any competition, therefore we always find it in sandy, dry, and gravelly sites. We find it in our area along the railroad tracks, some baseball fields, and we have started to see it on the borders of agricultural fields. This plant has probably single handedly supported many bike tire and car tire repair shops, as it will puncture bicycle and car tires.

The defense

Minimizing disturbance and preventing this weed from growing is the best way to control it. Residual herbicides (Sterilants) applied in late fall or early winter can prevent the weed from growing. In sensitive sites, such as the alleyways, using Telar XP at 1.5 ounces per acre is very effective in early spring or during the growing season. If the weeds are along the edges of your fields and lawns, try to plant more grass. Digging up these plants is very effective, just keep in mind that you must get to the root of the plant as they will grow back



Puncturevine seeds can puncture bicycle and car tires.

if you just scrape them off the surface. Just roll the plant in front of you with your shovel, and when you find the root, dig it up and pick the plant up by this root and place it into your container for disposal (garbage is fine as the weed will get buried very deep in the landfills). 2,4-D is effective, but you must treat often.



The triangular seed of puncturevine produces sharp points.

Series Continues

Jeffrey Pettingill, weed control supervisor for Baker County, will be writing an occasional article about a common noxious weed in the area. Pettingill encourages people to call him if they have weed questions or see a species they’re not familiar with. His office number is 541-523-0618 and his cell is 541-519-0204.

MALHEUR COUNTY RETURNED TO PHASE 1 RESTRICTIONS ON MONDAY

COVID-19 spread prompts return to restrictions in Malheur County

By Les Zaitz
Malheur Enterprise

VALE — The yellow tape has to go back up around playgrounds, closing them to kids. Churches, which have been allowed to have up to 250 people in attendance, have to cut back again — to no more than 50. And as Malheur County heads back into 100-degree weather, two sources of relief for local children will close on Monday — the Vale pool and the Ontario splash pad. The moves all come as health authorities take steps to get more Malheur County residents to distance from each other to get the coronavirus under control. Unless COVID-19 is tamed, state officials say, Malheur County could follow Umatilla County back to the restrictive measures that stop restaurant dining, close hairdressers and barbers and make certain retailers put up the “closed” sign. “The COVID-19 virus is a deadly threat that is spreading like wildfire across Malheur County,” said Thomas Wheatley, interim communications director for Gov. Kate Brown. “If the community cannot get the virus under control, then we will need to return to baseline stay home status to prevent additional deaths.” The governor underscored the urgency of Malheur County’s situation by order-

“*The COVID-19 virus is a deadly threat that is spreading like wildfire across Malheur County.*” — Thomas Wheatley, interim communications director for Oregon Gov. Kate Brown

ing the county to return to tighter restrictions on public behavior starting Monday, Aug. 17. As she did so, the number of people infected with the virus continues to grow. As of Friday, 889 cases were identified. Thirteen people are in such serious medical condition they are in the hospital. Since March, 15 people have died related to COVID-19, and the state announced that a state prison inmate died on Wednesday. The toll on residents has been mounting for weeks. On June 1, the county reported just 32 cases dating back to March 29, and 4.7% of those getting tested were showing signs of the infection. By July 1, four times as many cases were reported while the number of tests had only doubled. Through July, the number of cases increased fivefold. More worrisome to health authorities is how many tests were coming back positive. Health experts aim to keep that rate at 5% or lower, indicating that while a virus is present, it’s not out of control.

Malheur County has seen only increasing percentages of those tested showing signs of infection. On July 1, that percentage was 8.3%. A month later, it was 17.7%. In the last week, that nearly doubled to 32%. The state and county have tried a variety of measures across Oregon and in Malheur County to slow the spread. Brown has mandated that masks be worn in public places. The governor and the Malheur County Court on July 15 put the lid on indoor social gatherings such as birthdays, declaring no more than 10 people could be at such events. Malheur County went a step farther, saying outdoor social gatherings could have no more than 25 people — half what the state was allowing. The limits haven’t worked.

State and county officials cite two key reasons. They say people continue to gather in groups, allowing the virus to spread among people who may not appear infected. “Social gatherings are a major source of the spread of the disease — often because we let our guard down around people know,” Wheatley said in his email to the Enterprise. And officials say that proximity to Idaho, which has far fewer restrictions, means it’s likely Malheur County is unwittingly importing the virus, either by people from Idaho who work in Oregon or those from Malheur County traveling to Idaho for shopping and wide-open events such as rodeos. But health officials concede they don’t know for sure where people in Malheur County are getting the virus.

Paradise Awaits 2021

You travel with your mind every day. Wouldn't it be nice to take your body along? We can help make it happen.

Your paradise is waiting! Call us, we'll get you there!

Baker Valley Travel

541-523-9353 1-877-550-9353



The Indian Creek fire burns near Highway 20 between Vale and Juntura on Sunday afternoon.

Blaze burns 9,000 acres in Malheur County

VALE — Officials from the Bureau of Land Management are asking the public’s help for information about the possible cause of a wildfire that had burned 9,000 acres of sagebrush, juniper and grass in Malheur County as of Monday afternoon. The Indian Creek fire was reported about 11:30 a.m. Sunday near Highway 20 around Milepost 203. That’s about 13 miles east of Juntura, and about 43 miles west of Vale. The area is 70 air miles south of Baker City. Anyone who saw the fire when it was very small, or who noticed any suspicious activity in that area prior to the fire, or has factual information about the start of the fire, is encouraged to call Vale BLM firefighters at 541-473-6374. Or they can call the WeTip hotline at 1-800-472-7766. The call is toll-free and anonymous. The fire grew rapidly Sunday evening when strong outflow winds from thunderstorms buffeted the area. The fire spread from about 1,000 acres at 6:30 p.m. to an estimated 5,000 acres by 9 p.m., according to the BLM’s Vale District. The fire was 10% contained as of 3 p.m. on Monday. Vale District crews and volunteers from the Juntura Rangeland Fire Protection Association worked on the fire Sunday, with some crews continuing well past midnight Sunday to douse spot fires ignited by wind-blown embers, cutting bulldozer lines and grading existing roads in the area to establish firelines. Nine aircraft dropped retardant to slow the fire’s spread on Sunday. The Indian Creek fire burned around the Burns Paiute Ranch, but no structures were damaged. It is burning primarily on public land that is priority habitat for the sage grouse. No new fires were reported Sunday in Baker County. Forest Service fire crews contained a 1-acre fire, started by lightning and reported on Saturday, about 3 miles northwest of Greenhorn. Restrictions for state and federally-protected lands, including privately-owned property outside of a fire district, can be found at <http://bmidc.org/restrictions.shtml>

LOCAL BRIEFING

New Hope For Eastern Oregon Animals seeks volunteers for feral cat project New Hope for Eastern Oregon Animals is seeking volunteers to assist with its Baker City feral cat Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program. New Hope is seeking volunteers to assist with trapping, fostering litters from cats too small to undergo surgery, and feeding. No experience is necessary. Those interested in volunteering can call New Hope at 541-403-2710 or 541-403-0724.

State Police seeking public’s help in tracking down deer poacher A single mule deer doe was shot and left to waste in a farmer’s field near Smith Lake, just east of Interstate 84 near the Campbell Street interchange in Baker City, on late Monday, July 27, or early on July 28, according to a press release from the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division. The Oregon Hunters Association will give a \$500 reward, or hunters may choose to receive four hunting preference points, for information leading to a citation or arrest in the case. Anyone with information on this case can call the Turn In Poachers (TIP) Line at *OSP or 1-800-452-7888.

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Ratification of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution

“The Suffrage Movement in America”

A Reader’s Theater
Written by Gloria Holland, Salem, Oregon
Sharing the Stories of Remarkable Women
Told in the Voice of the Women and Their Time

Performances
Park Pavilion in Geiser-Pollman Park
6 p.m. August 15, 2020
6 pm. August 21, 2020
Oregon Trail Interpretive Trail Center
1:30 p.m. August 27, 2020
Baker City, Oregon