

Local & State

Invasive weed of the week

By Jeffrey Pettingill

The Enemy

Blue mustard (Chorispora tenella)

The Strategy

This is an annual mustard that grows very early in the year. This plant germinates in the late fall or late winter. It grows to a height of 12 inches. Once it matures it produces purple flowers with four petals (as with all plants in the mustard family). Each plant produces hundreds of seeds that form in a long pea looking pod that hangs from the plant and opens up by splitting into two shells to expose the seed.

Attack

Since this plant grows early in the year it gets a jump-start on the other plants for the needed moisture and nutrients. It usually invades disturbed areas and grows thick enough to be a carpet of purple flowers. It is also a problem for dryland grain growers and has been known to taint the milk of dairy cows. Once the plant dies it continues to shade germinating seeds of desirable plants and has caused fires to occur.

Defense

Annual plants are very easy to control, the problem is that there are usually lots of them. Early discing will kill the plant, but new seeds germinate after you plant your desirable species. Livestock will eat it, until the grasses emerge, then they will forage on the grasses and let the mustards grow.



Photo by: Richard Old
www.xidservices.com

Rich Old/Contributed Photo

Blue mustard produces purple flowers with four petals.

2,4-D is good early, and then a light application of Sulfonyleurea herbicides (Escort, Telar, Harmony xtra, etc) will literally "smoke" the weeds for the season. Roundup will be weak unless you put the 2,4-D in with it, but only do this if you are going to reseed the site. As with bur buttercup this is one of the first broadleaf weeds that we see in the early spring, so get control of them early so they will not bother you in the early summer.

Jeffrey Pettingill is the weed control supervisor for Baker County. He encourages people with noxious weed questions to call him at 541-523-0618 or 541-519-0204. He also encourages people to like the Baker County Weed District's Facebook page.



Photo by: Richard Old
www.xidservices.com

Jeffrey Pettingill/Contributed Photo

Blue mustard is among the broadleaf weeds that bloom early in the spring.

Cemetery cleanup set

Baker City's maintenance contractor, Grass Masters, will be doing the spring cleanup at Mount Hope Cemetery, including removing deteriorated decorations and flowers, from April 12-26.

The city is asking people to remove those items before April 12. They can

be replaced starting April 27. Items that are left and that the contractor has to move will be stored, except perishable items, until Nov. 1, 2021.

A copy of the cemetery rules is available at www.bakercity.com, and more information is available by calling 541-524-2047.

MUSIC

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"I'm a big gardener, and it was too dry in Tucson," she said.

Alaska, by contrast, had abundant water, but a short growing season.

Now Sarno is looking for a location in Baker City to serve as her Music Garden where she can teach music as well as gardening and cooking skills.

She teaches violin, viola, piano, guitar, ukulele, mandolin, songwriting, music theory, and composition.

"I can play pretty much anything with strings," she said.

Her genres include Celtic, folk, country, jazz, spiritual, classical, rock, bluegrass, worship and pop.

She said she composed music for the PBS documentary films "Rewilding Kernwood" and "Arctic Daughter." She's served as fiddler for country, jazz and bluegrass bands,

and plays piano for ensembles and background music for social gatherings.

In more than 50 years of instruction, she said she's had students from ages 4

to 84 and welcomes beginners, intermediate, and advanced musicians. She also coaches advanced students in music ensembles and bands.

"I've had so much fun playing music with other musicians. I want to pass that on," she said.

Her students may choose to read music, play by ear, or both.

In addition to lessons, she offers summer day camps that include music activities, as well as lessons on gardening and making Italian-style food from scratch.

"The kids not only have fun in the kitchen together, but lay down habits they will keep their whole lives," she said.

She is ready to offer lessons now, although she is still searching for the perfect place for her Music Garden, which would include space to teach music, garden, and cook.

"I haven't found my Music Garden yet," she said.

Those interested in lessons, or with suggestions for a location, can contact Sarno by phone at 907-756-3356 or email at lindisarno@gmail.com.

"I've had so much fun playing music with other musicians. I want to pass that on."

— Lillianne Sarno

The cloudy future of political redistricting

By Gary A. Warner

Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — The fuzzy future of Oregon politics east of the Cascades went public last week — no diagrams, charts, data — really nothing tangible at all to show how new legislative and congressional districts will be drawn.

"We don't have any maps," said Rep. Andrea Salinas, D-Lake Oswego, chair of the House Redistricting Committee. "We don't have any numbers from the census."



Salinas

Salinas and her Senate counterpart, Sen. Kathleen Taylor, D-Milwaukie, said they were making a good faith effort to hold the legally required 10 public hearings on new political maps.

Maps that don't exist — at least, not yet.

The hearings are collateral damage from the constitutional car crash headed to the Oregon Supreme Court.

The once-a-decade process of rebalancing populations in legislative and congressional districts is a smolderingly hot political wreck. Any fix isn't expected earlier than autumn.

These are not normal times

Like so many things over the past year, COVID-19 is the main problem.



EO Media Group/File

The Oregon Capitol in Salem.

In normal times, the U.S. Census counts people every decade, in years that end in zero.

The Oregon Legislature gets detailed Oregon data by April 1 of the following year. Lawmakers have until the end of their session on July 1 to get maps of 30 Senate, 60 House and either five or six congressional districts to the governor.

If they can't agree on a redistricting plan, the secretary of state takes over the mapmaking with an Aug. 15 deadline.

But these are not normal times.

COVID-19 crippled the census count. The Legislature received no data. No maps are

being drawn for the governor. There's no dispute for the secretary of state to resolve.

The census officials in Washington, D.C., have been saying sorry for months. But given all the upheaval in their work, they now say data to draw districts won't get to Oregon until Sept. 30. That is six months late, and well beyond constitutional and statutory deadlines.

To employ an overused term during the current pandemic, the situation is "unprecedented." Translation: Nobody knows what to do because it's never been done before.

Adding to the drama: The official population numbers

are expected to earn Oregon a sixth congressional seat, its first in 40 years. The new district will have to be shoehorned into the existing congressional map.

Proposing a 'back to the future' solution

The Legislature has a "back to the future" solution. It's asking the Oregon Supreme Court to set the deadlines aside, reset the clock, and give lawmakers another shot at redistricting when the data arrives in the fall. A special session of the Legislature would meet to approve the work.

Secretary of State Shemia Fagan supports the idea.

The Legislature wants up to 90 days after the data arrives to create the maps.

Fagan does not support that timeline.

Pushing redistricting into December would be cutting things close, Fagan has said.



Fagan

Any hitch and there could be no maps when candidates are supposed to start filing for the offices in January 2022. As the state's official election referee, she might have to step in.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, and Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, filed a petition with the Oregon Supreme Court this week to stop Fagan from drawing her own maps.

Fagan wants the Legis-

lature to draw districts using alternative data to the U.S. Census. The Oregon Constitution doesn't explicitly demand redistricting be done with the census numbers.

But it always has used the census, lawmakers say. Doing things differently than how it's been done for more than a century would be a surefire way to tangle with federal courts wanting to ensure Oregon was following civil rights and voting rights laws.



Kotek



Courtney

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