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Weed Problem In Oregon Dates Back A Long Way

OREGON STATE COLLEGE — Old sea captains putting in on the Oregon coast weren't entirely blameless. Neither were the Russians nor the Turks.

They all had a hand in compounding Oregon's five million dollar yearly headache—a rough estimate by experts on what weeds

will cost the state this year.

Oregon started out with a fairly clean slate in its first days of farming, nearly a half-century ahead of statehood. It was grass country, forests and scrubby trees.

Weeds came with progress, with commerce and people. Weed seed came in ships, on covered wagons, stuck to the hair of animals, and lodged in the cuffs of trousers. Most of the weed seed is traced to other countries because the United States was forced to look back to the Old World for most of its crop seed.

We bought Turkestan alfalfa seed from the Near East just before World War I, and received the menacing Russian knapweed seed in the same shipment. Today, Oregon has some 10,000 acres infested with the weed, mostly east of the Cascades, says Rex Warren, Oregon State College farm crops specialist.

Gorse, the yellow-orange blossomed ornamental-turned weed—was brought to the Oregon coast by sea captains before 1900 and used as hedge plants.

Taller than a man, thorny, and vigorous, gorse has invaded some 25,000 acres of coastal lands and is gaining ground. Early records indicate it first grew in the coast town of Bandon. By the middle

1930's, gorse had spread through and around the town. Its highly flammable, oily branches provided fuel for the fire that destroyed Bandon in 1936.

Dalmatian toadflax is another menace introduced to Oregon as an ornamental from southern Europe. Similar to snapdragon with orange blossoms, it was used around cemeteries. It's still on the increase, Warren says.

White top is a weed scourge of Oregon's eastern border on some 20,000 acres. It was first noted in the U.S. in 1898 along the New York docks and is believed to have crossed the Atlantic in soil used as ship ballast.

Not all such "imports" proved to be menaces. Highland bentgrass, a favorite turf grass in western Oregon, reportedly came as packing for a shipment of dishes from Germany to a general store near Aurora. It sprouted and thrived at the store's rubbish pile and grew into a million dollar Oregon crop.

Thus, Oregon inherited the bitter with the sweet, although not all were imported. Poison oak, sagebrush, and quackgrass are but a few of the "native" weeds.

The sum total costs Oregon about five million dollars a year, Warren estimates, in reduced crop

yields, livestock losses, medical bills for allergies and rashes, weeding costs, seed cleaning and other control measures.

War against weeds has built mushrooming agricultural chemical industries. Biggest boost came with development of 2,4-D during World War II. Its use as a "selective" weed killer set the stage for whole arsenals of chemicals.

Oregon State College agricultural chemists and agronomists test dozens of new materials each year—netting two or three for commercial use. Eptam, simazin, atrazine, and diuron may soon be household names to farmers.

Entomologists are also in the thick of the battle looking for insects that restrict their diet to certain weeds, clean up the weeds, then die for lack of food. Beetles brought into Oregon from Australia and Europe in 1944 have almost eradicated the once-troublesome St. Johnswort weed.

Scientists are now testing a beetle in Paris, France, laboratories for control of tansy ragwort weed now spread over 100,000 western Oregon acres.

Intertwined with Oregon history, weeds remain negative symbols of progress, but symbols that are slowly losing ground to 20th Century science, Warren says.

E. R. Jackman Retires From Range Post

E. R. Jackman, one of Oregon's foremost agricultural leaders, retired June 30 after nearly 40 years with Oregon State College extension service.

An OSC extension farm crops specialist, Jackman blazed the trail for many of Oregon's major agricultural advances. He personified the "field worker" extension specialist, taking his teachings out to farm meetings and tours, visiting remote farms and crossroads throughout Oregon.

He joined Oregon extension service in 1920 and has been most closely identified with the state's grassland and wheat programs. He helped develop Oregon's multi-million dollar grass seed industry, promoted face-lifting of eastern Oregon's rangelands through sagebrush removal and seeding of grasses and grazing alfalfas, and has been a strong advocate of pasture improvement programs throughout Oregon.

He taught common-sense farm-

ing practices with a blend of agricultural science, humor, and philosophy and with keen insight for the right crop for the right piece of land and circumstances, college leaders noted.

A skillful writer with the human interest touch, he widened his circle of influence with articles in many regional and national magazines. His understanding of Oregon—its people and its resources—underlay all his teachings of new and better ways of farming.

Dr. A. L. Strand, OSC president, says "a man like E. R. Jackman comes along at rare intervals in any organization. Jackman has made an indelible mark on Oregon agriculture. He has lifted it by the strength of his ideas and the sincerity of his purpose to something it could not have been without him."

F. L. Ballard, OSC extension service director, credits much of Jackman's leadership to an unusual ability to keep ahead of the needs of agriculture.

Youngsters Give Up Time On Saturday To Study

ABINGTON, Pa. (UPI) — The moppets of the Cedar Road School are trooping back to class on Saturdays, of all things, and even stranger, they are doing it voluntarily in order to learn a foreign language.

The Cedar Road School is pioneering an experiment in making courses in French, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian available to the students in grades two through six.

And nearly half of the 154 pupils in those grades have enrolled for the classes.

The program, purely voluntary and sparked by the Abington Township School District, got under way last February and proved so successful that plans already are being made to continue it when the fall term opens in September.

Marian Garrison, principal of Cedar Road School, said the program involves teaching the children languages by conversation. The parents themselves are participating in the instruction and report their children are making amazing progress in actually talk-

ing the foreign languages.

An enrollment fee of \$2 is charged for each course, proceeds from which will buy foreign language books, take care of incidental expenses . . . and pay for a party planned for the end of the current term.

The classes are held "without any written material or homework or grammatical instruction," according to Paul J. LaMorgia, one of the group that planned the courses.

"The object is purely conversational," he said. "The purpose is to get children's ears acquainted with the sound of a foreign language in order to help adjust their oral ability for handling foreign sounds before professional teaching begins at the junior high school level."

The teachers, in addition to Miss Garrison and LaMorgia, include Mrs. A. A. Alexander, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, who was born in Kiev, Russia. She taught Russian for the Berlitz school in 1918 and speaks several Slavic languages plus French and Italian. Now she is concentrating on teaching Russian at the Cedar Road School.

"We can contribute to the good understanding of all countries and continents by teaching our children foreign languages early," Miss Garrison said. "We believe learning is the first step towards liking our foreign neighbors."

CORNERING THE MARKET

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E. R. JACKMAN

Early in the 1920s for example, Jackman encouraged trial plantings of crested wheatgrass that was destined to seed millions of U.S. acres in the 1930s during the wheat reduction programs. He helped put Oregon grass seed growers a decade ahead of the rest of the country with improved methods and recently set the stage for further Oregon range development with some 125 grazing alfalfa trials in eastern Oregon.