

Prevention, Control & Eradication

Integrated weed management involves developing a control plan which is implemented over a period of time. Control plans are dictated by the type of weed, severity of infestation and proximity to water, trees and other native or desirable vegetation.

PREVENTION is the first line of defense in keep weeds from occurring or increasing in an area. Utilize only certified weed free seed, hay, gravel or fill. People, animals and equipment transport and distribute weed seeds. Ensure equipment and vehicles are clean and free of visible debris before entering a weed free zone. In addition, ground disturbance needs to be minimized as much as possible on all lands, including construction, maintenance activities and all general land uses. All areas are prone to infestation when disturbed; re-vegetation of native species is needed immediately after the disturbance has occurred. All new subdivisions are required to submit and have an approved 5 Yr Management plan on file with the Lewis & Clark County Weed District prior to final plat approval.

CONTROL is the most frequently used weed management strategy. Control measures reduce a weed population in an area to a level where you can utilize the land to its fullest potential. Adequate control also may prevent future infestations. There are four main tools used for control; **chemical, cultural, mechanical, and biological**. THE BEST TIME TO ERADICATE NOXIOUS WEEDS IS BEFORE THEY GET ESTABLISHED IN AN AREA.

Chemical control – Selective herbicides (Milestone, Curtail, 2, 4-D) target broadleaf plants and won't harm grasses. Broad spectrum or nonselective herbicides (Roundup) control a large variety of vegetation. These are most often used when total vegetation control desirable and reseeding is desired. Under most circumstances a select broadleaf herbicide is recommended. Please consult with your local Weed District or ranch supply store if you need suggestions or have questions about which herbicide is right for your particular situation.

Timing of the herbicide application is critical for optimal effectiveness. Generally from late May to early June, when the weather is warm and dry is the desired late spring application time.

Herbicide applications can be made up to pre-flowering stage for most species. At flowering stage it's recommended to cut/hand pull because the growth stage is over and herbicide application will have little effect. Fall herbicide applications are recommended late September through October for many species. Wait for the first frost and subsequent warm, dry days. Cultural control methods are implemented to favor desirable plant growth. Fertilization, irrigation and planting offer competition against non-native and undesirable species. Cultural control measures are more often related to large crop parcels that require constant cultivation, crop rotation, nutrient and water management and re-vegetation.

Mechanical control methods physically disrupt weed growth. Hand pulling, mowing and burning are examples of mechanical weed control. These are feasible control options depending on the type of weed

and size of infestation. Mowing and hand pulling is highly recommended at the flowering stage, prior to seeding, to prevent further propagation. Mechanical control methods physically disrupt weed growth. Hand pulling, mowing and burning are examples of mechanical weed control. These are feasible control options depending on the type of weed and size of infestation. Mowing and hand pulling is highly recommended at the flowering stage, prior to seeding, to prevent further propagation.

Biological control methods use living organism to disrupt weed growth. Often, the organism is an insect or plant pathogen and a natural enemy of the weed. Generally, biological control is effective when combined with other control measures and not a sole solution. Biological agents are host specific and there aren't agents available for all noxious weeds. Grazing can be effective depending on the type of weed. Goats and sheep will consume and control a vast array of various, difficult to control invasive species.

EARLY DETECTION AND ERRADICATION of newly introduced weeds is the best way to prevent establishment. Early detection programs should include weed identification, mapping and determining high priority areas. Certain areas may be more vulnerable to disturbance or weed invasion, and should be considered high priority areas. These areas should be clearly marked on a map and should be inventoried whenever possible. It's suggested to identify and map all of your weeds during the flowering stage. This is when they are most noticeable. Control options may vary depending upon weed species and location. This allows getting a jump start on them in the spring and knowing exactly which weeds you have and exactly where they are located. Colored marker flags make good visual aids. Cooperate with adjacent landowners and other agencies in order to coordinate early detection efforts around high priority areas. If you share weed infestations with your neighbors, go meet them and try to address the problem together. Can you cut costs by working together? Consider having a meeting with neighbors and other local landowners. If you need outside advice or assistance call the Lewis and Clark County Weed District, 406-447-8372 .