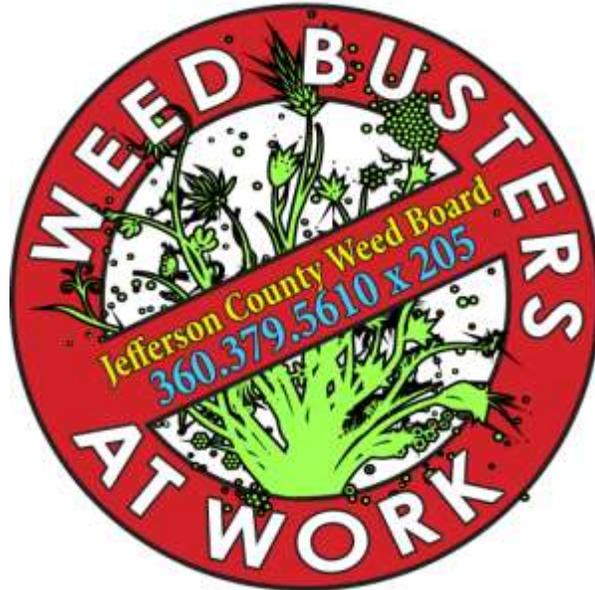


WEED NEWSLETTER FOR JULY 2012

WEED BUSTER TRAINING



We are planning to repeat the Weed Buster Training that was offered in 2011, in a slightly different format. Last year we offered a four-week program, one class each week. This year it will be just one day, 12:30 to 4:30, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, August 4th.

This will be a FREE training in weed ID and control. We hope to then have trained and highly motivated volunteers who will organize weed pulls in their neighborhoods or in our parks or on trails.

Get involved, meet your neighbors, get healthy outdoor exercise and help rid the County of Noxious Weeds.

Let us know now if you would be interested—call 360-379-5610 ext 205, or email edixon@co.jefferson.wa.us--and let us know if the August 4th date works for you. Also, watch the Weed Board web site <http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/WeedBoard/Default.asp> for more information.

OLD MAN'S BEARD (*Clematis vitalba*)



(Courtesy Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board)



(Courtesy King County Noxious Weed Control Board)

The Weed Board has recently received reports that some areas of Port Townsend are becoming infested with **old man's beard**, sometimes called travelers' joy (*Clematis vitalba*).



(Courtesy King County Noxious Weed Control Board)

This import from Europe and south western Asia is an aggressively spreading woody vine. Creamy white flowers in summer are followed by feathery seed heads in late summer and early fall, giving this vine its common name. These fluffy seed heads are persistent and quite conspicuous in the winter.

Impact and Spread

Young plants can grow 6 feet a year and the vines of can eventually grow up to 100 feet long and can blanket trees and other plants, preventing them from getting sunlight. The vines also add considerable weight to trees and can weaken or kill them. After the tree dies, old man's beard continues to grow, creating dense thickets of growth. The airborne seeds allow this vine to spread quickly to new locations. Also, damaged or cut stems can re-sprout so plants can spread vegetatively as well.

Control

Climbing vines can be cut at waist height, allowing the upper vines to die back. Lower vines and growth along the ground can be dug up or treated with an herbicide when the plant is actively growing. Make sure to carefully follow the label directions of the product being applied, wear the recommended personal protection equipment, and avoid drift and off-target application to surrounding vegetation.

Old man's beard is a Class C Noxious Weed on the Washington State Noxious Weed List. Control in Jefferson County is recommended but not required.

WILD CHERVIL UPDATE

Regular readers of this newsletter know that wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) is spreading rapidly in the county, especially on roadsides, and causing concern to the Weed Board and some landowners. There is now a Wild Chervil section on the Weed Board web page--

<http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/weedboard/Wild%20Chervil.asp>, but the situation changes rapidly and the web page is not updated daily.

Because of public opposition to herbicide use, the Weed Board decided at the May 17th Board Meeting to use manual or mechanical control methods in almost all cases. Consequently, we hired a local contractor to weed-whack wild chervil on the worst-affected roads—Eaglemount, Old Eaglemount, Center, one mile of West Valley, Larson Lake, Leland Valley and Boulton Roads. This was done at the end of May. Also, county road crews have mowed where they can, but many wild chervil plants grow well beyond the reach of the mowers. Volunteers have done hand-pulling or digging, especially on Larson Lake and Center Roads—many thanks to all concerned—your work is greatly appreciated. Plants have rebounded less than we expected, but there is some regrowth and a few flowers. Staff and volunteers are removing flower heads and digging plants where feasible, in an effort to prevent spread.



Larson Lake Road, May 2012—before weed-whacking

After plants had grown back a little we sprayed one mile of Larson Lake Road—one of the worst affected areas and one where all adjacent landowners wanted wild chervil gone and were comfortable with chemical control being used. We are continuing to monitor the sprayed portion and handpull plants on the remaining 3 miles of road.

POISON HEMLOCK REMINDER

Although great efforts have been made by homeowners, city crews and volunteers (MANY thanks to all!), there is still much poison hemlock in Port Townsend. Second year plants are easily recognizable—they are 4 to 6 feet tall with lacy white flowers. However, first year rosettes so closely resemble other plants, such as carrots, dill, parsley, garden chervil or anise, that we have great concerns over people accidentally eating them, especially since poison hemlock often grows on trails and in or near community gardens or peoples yards.



Young poison hemlock

However, several key features differentiate poison hemlock from other plants. As can be seen in the picture, even first year plants have purplish blotches on the stem. Also, poison hemlock has no hairs—all other similar plants have hairs on the stem or where the leaf joins the main stem. And finally, poison hemlock has a musty unpleasant smell, making it unlikely that people would want to eat it, but it does happen, as the linked article shows. So, do watch out for it, let others know what it is, and **remove** it. Digging or pulling flowering plants may not be feasible now, because the plants are large and woody and the ground is less moist than earlier in the year. However, flowering plants need to be cut down, before they make seed. This will NOT get rid of them, but it will prevent thousands of new seedlings next year. Disposal is sometimes a problem—the best method is to pile them up and cover well with black plastic. During the summer the pile will bio-degrade to practically nothing. First-year plants can still be pulled or dug.

Do be extremely careful when working with poison hemlock—wear gloves and be careful not to eat or touch your face till you have cleaned up thoroughly. Eating the plant is the main danger, but toxins can be absorbed through the skin or respiratory system. Symptoms include dilation of the pupils, dizziness and trembling. Quick treatment can reverse the harm and typically there are no noticeable aftereffects. If you suspect poisoning call for help immediately—call the poison control center, 1-800-222-1222.

<http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2012/06/garden-visitor-can-be-deadly-if-eaten/>.

WEED OF THE MONTH—JULY

TANSY RAGWORT (*Senecio jacobaea*)

- Tansy ragwort can grow 5-6 feet tall at maturity
- It is a biennial (2-year life cycle) that produces a dense rosette of dark green leaves the first year, and long stalks and flowers the second year.
- Reproduction is mainly by seed. One plant produces 5,000 to 200,000 seeds, which can remain viable in the soil for up to 16 years.



Look-Alikes (both non-native and invasive):



Common Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), has button like flowers; tansy ragwort has ray flowers, usually with 13 petals. The leaves of common tansy are fern-like with a strong smell; tansy ragwort leaves do not smell. Common tansy is a Class C weed.

Common Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*) grows only four to eight inches tall; and its drooping flowers are never fully open. Common groundsel is a Class C weed.



Distribution:

Tansy ragwort is very common on roadsides and in pastures throughout Jefferson County

Why Be Concerned?

- Tansy ragwort is invasive and will establish itself readily in disturbed areas.
- It is toxic and can be lethal to livestock, even after it is cut and dried in hay.
- All parts of the plant are poisonous, but flowers have the highest concentration of toxins.
- The toxins accumulate in an animal's body, causing irreversible liver damage.
- The toxic properties are also a threat to humans, because honey or milk can be contaminated if bees or goats eat tansy ragwort plants.

Control

- Mowing is NOT a good control strategy because mowed plants will send up many new shoots and flower on shorter stalks.
- Plants will be blooming shortly. They are EASY to recognize and to pull once in bloom..
- However, it is ESSENTIAL to clip off and bag the flowers heads and dispose of them in the trash. If left on the ground flowers will make viable seed which be dispersed.
- Herbicides can be used effectively. Contact the Weed Board for herbicide advice.

Tansy ragwort is a Class B weed selected for control throughout Jefferson County.