

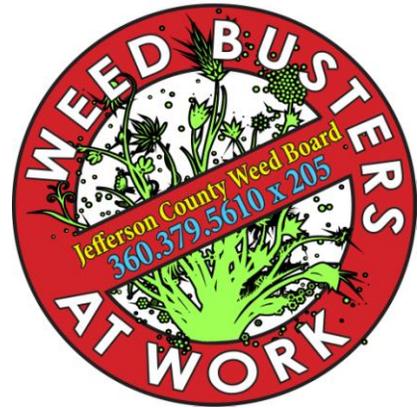
# WEED NEWSLETTER FOR OCTOBER 2012

## WEED BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION:

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<http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/WeedBoard>



## WEED BOARD MEETING:

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, from 5 to 7 at WSU—201 West Patison, Port Hadlock. All Weed Board meetings are open to the public. Call if you need directions.

## WEED BOARD MEMBER NEEDED:

We still need a **new Board Member**, to represent District 3 (Marrowstone Island, West Valley and Beaver Valley). If you are interested and are actively involved in farming, please contact the Weed Board.

**KNOTWEED** is the Weed of the Month and now is very good time to look out for it, because the leaves turn bright yellow in the fall and can easily be seen. For several years Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board, as part of the Olympic Knotweed Working Group, has cooperated with other agencies in controlling knotweed on streams and rivers. Funding for this endeavor has come from Washington State Department of Agriculture and we have worked closely with Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Board, North Olympic Salmon Coalition, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group and the Quinault Indian Nation, to name just a few of our partners. The major infestations in the county are on the Big Quilcene and Dosewallips Rivers, but other smaller patches have been found. Spencer Creek, Tarboo Creek, Oak Bay and the Kah Tai Lagoon are some sites where the Weed Board has controlled knotweed over the last 3 to 4 years. It is a Class B Noxious Weed. Control is required in Jefferson County only in and near pits and quarries, because these are places from which it can be spread easily. It is much more of a threat when it is near water than in a terrestrial situation and if anyone has knotweed on their property and it is near water, the Weed Board may be able to help control it.



Knotweed on the Big Quilcene River

## WEED OF THE MONTH—KNOTWEED

**Japanese knotweed** (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), **Giant knotweed** (*P. sachalinense*), **Bohemian knotweed**, (*P. bohemicum*) and **Himalayan knotweed** (*P. polystachyum*)

- Knotweed is a bamboo-like perennial that can grow over 15 feet in height, but dies down completely in the winter.
- Stems are smooth and swollen at joints where the leaf meets the stem.
- The tiny greenish-white flowers occur in branched sprays in late summer.
- Giant and Japanese knotweed are distinguished from each other primarily by the size of the leaf and height of the plant—giant being much larger with egg-shaped, slightly pointed leaves up to one foot in length. Japanese knotweed leaves are two to six inches.
- Japanese and giant knotweeds frequently hybridize, producing Bohemian knotweed, which is intermediate between them in size.
- Most of the knotweed in Jefferson County is believed to be Bohemian.
- Himalayan knotweed (which has not been seen in Jefferson County) has a much narrower leaf.
- Buckwheat family.



### Look-a-likes:

Knotweed is sometimes called “false bamboo” and the plants are similar.

### Distribution:

Knotweed is found in many places throughout Jefferson County, particularly along rivers and creeks.

### Ecology:

Knotweed is an aggressive colonizer that is generally spread by rhizomes—underground stems that send out roots and shoots. Rhizomes can spread 30 feet laterally and 6 feet deep. Small pieces of rhizome or stem can give rise to new plants. It also can be spread by seed.

### Why Be Concerned?

- Knotweed spreads quickly to form dense thickets that out-compete native plants and greatly alter natural ecosystems.
- Stream banks infested with knotweed do not provide the habitat structure that mature shrubs and trees provide, especially for nesting birds and bats.
- Knotweed prevents tree establishment along stream banks. These trees are sources of large woody debris essential for regulating stream energy and creating the channel complexity that salmon need for spawning and rearing.
- Once established, knotweed populations are very difficult to eradicate.

### What You Can Do:

- **DO NOT** buy or plant any of the invasive knotweed species!
- Mechanical control success varies. Digging is **NOT** recommended because knotweeds have extensive rhizomes and any fragments will result in new plants. Cutting the stems will cause new shoot growth.
- Repeated mowing during the growing season eventually reduces the root reserves, and sometimes, control is achieved.
- **DO NOT** throw stems or root pieces in rivers, lakes, or streams! They can sprout and cause a new infestation.
- Chemical control is most effective. Contact the Weed Board for recommendations.

## Noxious Weed Facts

- More than half the plants on the WA State Noxious Weed List were brought here as garden ornamentals.
- Some weeds, such as giant hogweed, can cause skin burns.
- Others, such as tansy ragwort or poison hemlock, are toxic to humans and animals.
- Weeds impact agriculture—they cause estimated crop losses of \$26 billion a year in the US alone. Sulfur cinquefoil, wild chervil, hawkweeds and knapweeds are especially invasive in pastures and cropland.
- Weeds are invading approximately 1.7 million acres of wildlife habitat each year in the US and are the second leading cause of reductions in biological diversity. When invasive plants replace natives there is less food and habitat for native wildlife. Purple loosestrife, an aggressive invader of wetlands, was originally introduced as a garden ornamental.
- Noxious weeds can reduce slope stability because most of them do not hold soil as well as the native shrubs and trees that they replace.
- Weeds such as reed canarygrass degrade water quality by slowing flow and raising water temperatures.
- Weeds impact property values. Ranches in Montana lose value if infested with knapweed and in England banks will not give loans on homes that have Japanese knotweed, because it can grow into structures and harm septic systems.



Giant hogweed

Meadow knapweed

Reed canarygrass

Purple loosestrife

### Purple Loosestrife Reappears on County Road!

Very few infestations of purple loosestrife have been found in Jefferson County. This is a good thing, because once established it is VERY hard to get rid of. The largest site in the county was found on the Coyle Peninsula several years ago. Bio-controls—insects that feed on it—were released and no plants were seen for several years. However, it reappeared this year and was spotted by Weed Board staff. More bio-control insects will be released next spring.