

WEED NEWSLETTER FOR OCTOBER 2013

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 21st, from 5 to 7 pm at the Tri-Area Community Center—10 West Valley Road in Chimacum. All Weed Board meetings are open to the public. Call if you need directions.

WEED BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED:

We need two new Board Members, to represent District 2—Cape George and Discovery Bay, and District 4—West End. If you are interested and are involved in farming then please contact us.

FALL WEED CONTROL

This time of year, when rains have loosened up the soil, but before it gets too wet and heavy, is an excellent time for **pulling** or **digging** weeds, thereby reducing problems in the spring. Many biennial weeds, especially our old enemies, poison hemlock and wild chervil, are already visible. They are in their rosette stage, building up roots and waiting to send up those long stalks and flowers next spring and summer. Pull them now, while they are small and vulnerable!!



Roadside Wild Chervil



Young Poison Hemlock

Other weeds that can be manually controlled this time of year include bull thistle, teasel, spotted knapweed and tansy ragwort. They are all biennials or short-lived perennials so if plants are pulled or dug now they will not re-grow. However, seeds still in the soil may germinate over the winter.



Bull thistle



Teasel—spreading rapidly in east Jefferson—dig rosettes now to help slow its spread



Spotted knapweed (note the distinctive blue-green color)



Tansy ragwort

Herb Robert can be pulled any time of year—it's an annual with little root mass so it comes out quite easily, but seeds can germinate year-round, so look out for seedlings and pull them whenever you can.



Be sure to dispose of plants correctly—many plants, especially herb Robert—will stay alive and continue to grow if left lying on the ground. Some plants can be composted, but do not compost plants with seeds, or toxic plants such as poison hemlock or tansy ragwort. If plants are non-compostable for these reasons they can be bagged and put in the trash, or piled up and covered with plastic or a tarp.

Fall can also be a good time for **covering and mulching**. A thick layer of overlapping cardboard, topped with several inches of mulch will not only kill plants under it, but will suppress seed germination and growth. However, covering in this fashion will eliminate all plants so it is not a good method if natives or other desirable plants are present. The cover should be left in place for at least two years, and the bare patch remaining should be replanted with desirable species. Otherwise, weeds will re-invade!

FACTS ABOUT THISTLES

Two invasive thistle species are very common in Jefferson County—bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*). Bull thistle is larger and spiniest than Canada thistle and it is a biennial—Canada thistle is a perennial with creeping underground roots, making it far more difficult to control. A small piece of root can grow into a whole new plant. For control strategies see our Fact Sheet--

<http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/WeedBoard/pdfs/FactSheets/CanadaThistle.pdf>



Bull Thistle



Canada Thistle



Canada Thistle

One other non-native thistle has been seen a couple of times in Jefferson County.. Milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*) is a Class A weed and is easy to recognize because of its large mottled leaves, which look as if milk has been spilled on them—hence the name. Call the Weed Board if you see this plant!!!

Several other invasive thistle species are on the State Noxious Weed List, but have not been seen in Jefferson County. They include Scotch thistle, slenderflower thistle and Italian thistle. For more information see the website of the State Noxious Weed Control Board, <http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/>



However, we also have two types of native thistle which should **NOT** be confused with the invasives. They are Indian thistle, sometimes known as edible thistle (*Cirsium edule*), and short-styled thistle (*Cirsium brevistylum*). Indian thistle is the more common and is frequently seen alongside trails when hiking in the Olympics. It has large purple flowers, similar to bull thistle, but the whole plant is much softer, the head droops and has a cobwebby look. Short-styled thistle is less common, and very similar to Indian thistle.



Weed of the Month—October BLACKBERRIES

Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) and Evergreen blackberry (*R. laciniatus*)

- Himalayan blackberry is extremely common throughout Jefferson County, on roadsides and undeveloped land. Evergreen blackberry is more common in the West end but is also seen county-wide.
- Himalayan blackberry stems (canes) can grow to 9 feet in height but often trail along the ground, growing 20-40 feet long.
- Thorns grow along the stems as well as on the leaves and leaf stalks.
- Himalayan blackberries have five distinct leaflets; each leaflet has a toothed margin and is generally oval in shape.
- Canes start producing berries in their second year.
- Himalayan blackberry usually loses its leaves in the winter, but can be evergreen, depending on the site.



Himalayan blackberry



Evergreen blackberry



Himalayan blackberry

The leaflets of evergreen blackberry are deeply lobed, making it easy to distinguish from Himalayan blackberry.

WHY BE CONCERNED?

- Both Himalayan and evergreen blackberries form impenetrable thickets, consisting of both dead and live canes.
- These thickets out-compete desirable native vegetation.
- Thickets can prevent movement of large animals.
- They are also a good source of food and shelter for RATS.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Because blackberries are very hard to control once established, prevention and early detection and removal are strongly advised.
- **HANDPULLING** or **DIGGING** can be effective if care is taken to remove the all of the roots.
- **Mowing** or **weed-whacking** are **not** effective control measures, because the extensive root system stores food reserves and sends up new shoots after mowing.
- **HERBICIDES** can be effective, but should always be applied with care. **Cut-stump treatment** (cutting the plant down to a few inches above ground and immediately painting the cut stump surface with undiluted herbicide) is a very effective way to control blackberries. Check the label first—make sure that this method is listed.