



FACT SHEET

BUTTERFLY BUSH

(Buddleja davidii)

- Butterfly bush is a large, deciduous shrub that can grow up to 10 feet tall.
- Leaves are lance-shaped, opposite, up to 4 inches long.



- Flowers (above) are clustered together to form spikes at the end of stems and bloom from mid-summer into fall.
- It is native in China.
- Butterfly bush colonizes disturbed areas such as roadsides and riparian areas.
- It can grow in most soil types and climates.
- Figwort family



WHY BE CONCERNED?

- Butterfly bush can quickly form dense thickets that out-compete and inhibit reproduction of native vegetation.
- It has become a pest in Britain, New Zealand, and Australia. It is now listed as one of England's top 20 invasive weeds.
- Butterfly bush is starting to form dense stands near the mouth of the Dosewallips River and could do the same on other Jefferson County waterways.
- Butterfly bush produces numerous seeds (up to 3 million per plant) that are carried by the wind and water. These seeds can readily germinate in disturbed areas.

Butterfly bush is a Class B Noxious Weed. Control is required county-wide.

ECOLOGY:

- Butterfly bush is very fast growing and quick to mature. Plants can produce viable seed in their first year.
- One plant can produce millions of seeds, with an estimated germination rate of over 80%.
- Branches that break off can grow roots and produce new plants.
- It can grow in almost any soil type, is flood and drought-tolerant, and can survive in many different climates.

DISTRIBUTION:

Butterfly bush is a commonly used ornamental and is in many gardens and landscaped areas in Jefferson County. Some plants have been found on roadsides and a large infestation is present at the mouth of the Dosewallips River.

CONTROL

Prevention and early detection are the best means of control.

- **Do not buy** or plant *Buddleja species*
- **Encourage** local nurseries to stop selling it (a few still do)
- **Deadhead** (remove spent flowers) before they go to seed. Dispose of them carefully—do not spread seed!
- **Monitor** any site with existing butterfly bush for stray seedlings and **remove** the seedlings.

HANDPULLING is recommended for small populations and isolated stems. The plants should be pulled out before they have set seed. The entire rootstock must be pulled since regrowth from root fragments is possible. Minimize disturbance to soil and native plants.

MOWING may be effective if done frequently and if the cut stems dry rapidly. Otherwise, cut stems will resprout.

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL: A program in New Zealand has begun to consider biological controls in forestry plantations: a species of weevil and a stem boring beetle are being considered. There are no biological controls currently available in the U.S.

HERBICIDES can be effective, but should always be applied with care. Do not apply herbicides over or near water bodies. Read the label to check that you are applying a herbicide in the right place, to the right plant, at the right time, and in the right amount. For perennial weeds, long term control requires stopping seed production **and** attacking the weed's root system. Translocated herbicides, (ones that move throughout a plant's system) are recommended. These are most effective on young, actively growing plants because the herbicide moves around the plant more quickly. Also, herbicide is more easily absorbed by clean, new leaves that have not developed the thickened cuticle (waxy coating) present on mature leaves, which resists herbicide penetration.

- **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 butterfly bush. Check the label first—make sure that this method is listed.
- **Note:** Most herbicides will **NOT** prevent germination of weed seeds already in the soil, so monitoring and retreatment are necessary.

Call the Weed Board for specific herbicide advice..

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