

Backyard Guide to Selected Obnoxious Weeds



**Pierce County Noxious Weed Control Board
1420 112th Street East
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Backyard Guide to Selected Obnoxious Weeds

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Crop Protections Branch, Roy Cranston.

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DISCLAIMER

Often it is appropriate to mention trade or brand names. They are used, however, only for the purpose of information. Your local county weed board does not guarantee or warrant products or methods, nor does it imply approval of any product to the exclusion of others.

Many obnoxious weeds are often found growing in wetland areas. The use of herbicides or mechanical control methods may be considered a regulated activity under the Critical Areas Ordinance of Pierce County. It is highly recommended that you check with Pierce County Planning and Land Services Department at (253) 798-7210 prior to the control of any of these problem nuisance weeds.

The following are species that may be found in wetlands:

Poa annua	Agropyron repens
Rumex crispus	Echinochloa crusgalli
Equisetum arvense	Juncus effuses
Chenopodium album	Ranunculus repens
Solanum dulcamara	Cicuta douglasii

Dear Landowner:

Did you know?

1. Washington State has a noxious weed control law called RCW 17.10.
2. Technical advice is available through your local County Noxious Weed Board Office.

Please call your local County Noxious Weed Control Board or your local Master Gardener for more information.

PREFACE

This Backyard Field Guide has been prepared to help the citizens of your county and Washington State identify some of the more common nuisance weeds that challenge us in our yards and landscape areas. Proper identification of problem weeds is the crucial first step in gaining knowledge about these troublesome plants so that a well-planned control strategy can be developed.

All weeds are organized alphabetically by the most common name and the Latin name at the beginning of the guide.

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ANNUAL BLUEGRASS (*Poa annua*)



- * Generally, annual plants, although short-lived perennial variants exist particularly where irrigated; leaves curve upward at the tip like the bow of a boat; spreads on the ground or forms dense clumps 5 to 20 cm tall.
- * One of the earliest grasses to grow in the spring. Not well adapted to acid soils.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation, hand pulling.

Herbicide: Roundup applied to actively growing plants.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

May be found growing in wetland areas. Check with your county Planning and Land Service Department first before attempting control.

BARNYARDGRASS (*Echinochloa crusgalli*)



Flowering spikelets produce an abundance of seed



Flattened stem base

- * Annual growing to 1.5 metres tall; stems usually flattened in cross-section at the base; smooth leaves often purplish at the base; flowers covered with short, stiff hairs, and often a straight or twisted bristle (awn).
- * Can produce over 1 million seeds.
- * Can remove as much as 80 percent of nitrogen from the soil.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation in seeding stage only.

Herbicide: Roundup applied to actively growing plants.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

6 May be found growing in wetland areas. Check with your county Planning and Land Service Department first before attempting control.

BEDSTRAW (*Galium aparine*)



Leaves in whorl around square



Seed-cases produced in pairs are covered with hooked hairs

- * Native annual with square stems and short, bristly downward pointing hooks on stem corners; rough, hairy leaves grow in whorls of 6 to 8; burr-like seeds produced in pairs.
- * Commonly known as bedstraw, cleavers is particularly damaging in burrlike cereals and canola where it clings to and trails around these crops.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation.

Herbicide: 2, 4-D poor, less than 59%.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

BLACKBERRY

(*Rubus laciniatus* / *macropetalus* / *procerus*)



- * A perennial bush weed.
- * New plants start each year from the base of the parent plant, underground rhizomes and seeds.
- * The canes (stems) are from light green in early growth, to rusty brown in mature growth.
- * The canes also have sharp thorns that may grow to 3/4" long.
- * The leaves are oblong, pointed at the tip, and have saw like edges.
- * The flowers are usually white and about one inch in diameter.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Mowing has very little effect because of the underground rhizomes and new growth from the parent plant.

Biological: Unknown at this time.

Herbicide: Crossbow and Banvel may be applied after fruit has set. A thorough wetting of foliage is necessary. **CAUTION:** Read the label!

BOG RUSH *(Juncus effusus)*



Flowers produced on one side of stem

- * Native perennial growing in rounded clumps up to 1.3 metres tall from creeping rootstocks.
- * Common on poorly drained soils in coastal areas.
- * Often referred to as swamp grass, this rush is not in the Grass Family.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Hand pulling.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

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BROAD-LEAVED PLANTAIN (*Plantago major*)



Narrow-leaved plantain



*Flower spike of
narrow-leaved plantain*

- * Perennial with a short, tough rootstock; leaves all basal, oval to elliptic, dark green with 3 to 7 strong veins; inconspicuous flowers borne in a narrow elongated spike on leafless stems.
- * Narrow-leaved plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) has long, narrow leaves and shorter flower spikes.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation.

Herbicide: Weedmaster or Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

BURDOCK (*Arctium* species)



Flowerhead bracts with hooked spines

- * Biennial weeds common in farmyards, fencelines, roadsides, streambanks, and idle areas well known for their rounded flower heads with hooked spines that easily attach to clothing and animals.
- * Common burdock (*Arctium minus*) grows 1 to 3 metres in height; lower leaf stalks are hollow; flower heads are less than 2.5 cm across and scattered along the stems.
- * Great burdock, sometimes called giant burdock (*Arctium lappa*), is similar in appearance but lower leaf stalks are solid and flower heads are over 2.5 cm across and are arranged in a flat-topped cluster rather than along the stem.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation or hand pulling.

Herbicide: Weedmaster or Crossbow.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

COMMON CHICKWEED (*Stellaria media*)



Deeply divided star-shaped flowers

- * Annual to winter annual with branching prostrate stems; line of hairs grows on one side of stem and leaf stalks; broadly oval, pointed, smooth leaves; small star-shaped white flowers with 5 petals.
- * Flowers throughout the season, maturing many seeds shortly after flowering; approximately 15,000 seeds per plant.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Hand pulling.

Herbicide: Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

COMMON MALLOW (*Malva neglecta*)



White to pale lilac flowers



12 to 15 nutlets in button-like disk

- * Annual to short-lived perennial with prostrate to semi-erect stems; 10 to 60 cm long; long-stalked rounded leaves with heart-shaped base and 5 to 7 broad shallow-toothed lobes; white to pale lilac flowers; seeds in round, flat button-like disk of 12 to 15 smooth nutlets.
- * Similar to round-leaved mallow (*Malva pusilla*) that has roughened ridges on nutlets.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation.

Herbicide: Weed Master or Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

CREEPING BUTTERCUP (*Ranunculus repens*)



*Deeply cut leaves
of tall buttercup*

- * Perennial with slender, fibrous roots; dark green leaves, often with white spots, are divided into 3 leaflets and are hairy and deeply lobed; hairy stems root at the nodes; bright yellow waxy flowers divided into 5 petals; seeds are smooth with a hooked apical beak.
- * As with most buttercup species, contains a toxin that can result in pain and inflammation in grazing animals; not a problem when cured in hay.
- * Sometimes confused with tall buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) that has a more upright growth habit and more deeply cut leaf lobes.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Hand pulling.

Herbicide: MCPA.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

May be found growing in wetland areas. Check with your county Planning

14 and Land Service Department first before attempting control.

CURLED DOCK (*Rumex crispus*)



Mature plant



Wavy, crisp-margined leaves

Broad-leaved dock rosette

- * Perennial in the Buckwheat Family growing 0.8 to 1.5 metres tall; deep penetrating yellow taproot; dark green leaves wavy and crisp along the margins; plant turns a rusty-red colour when mature.
- * Produces 3,000 to 4,000 seeds per plant.
- * A similar plant, broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) is distinguished by its large leaves that are rounded or heart-shaped at the base.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Hand pulling (loose or moist soil).

Herbicide: Weedmaster or Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

May be found growing in wetland areas. Check with your county Planning and Land Service Department first before attempting control.

ENGLISH IVY (*Hedera helix*)



- * In its juvenil phase, a creeping woody vine with 3 to 5 lobed waxy leaves, and stems that have adventitious rootlets at the leaf node that allow the plant to climb verticle surfaces. Adult flowering stems are erect and non-climbing with leaves mostly unlobed. Ivy flowers in autumn and producing fruits the following spring.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Manually cutting and pulling has proved to be successful but is labor intensive and must be repeated as new areas are infested.

Herbicide: Garlon 4 at the rate of 6.5 oz per gallon plus Nu-film to increase sticking to leaf surfaces. Apply immediately after cutting to that remaining portion of the plant still in the soil. The herbicide method does kill adjacent vegetation and should be used only when ivy is the sole plant in the area.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

FIELD BINDWEED (*Convolvulus arvensis*)



*Hedge bindweed with
larger leaves and flowers*

- * Creeping-rooted perennial from Europe often called morning-glory; vine-like stems trail on the ground or twine counter-clockwise around supports; arrow-shaped leaves with sharp-pointed or rounded basal lobes; funnel-shaped white to light pink flowers 2.5 cm across; two small bracts 2.5 cm below flower.
- * Roots can penetrate to over 5 metres in soil; seeds can remain viable for up to 50 years.
- * Often confused with hedge bindweed (*Convolvulus sepium*) that has larger leaves and flowers (up to 5 cm across).

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Hand pulling.

Herbicide: Weedmaster, Crossbow, Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

FIELD HORSETAIL (*Equisetum arvense*)



Fertile stems bear spore producing cones



Sterile stems produce whorl of leaf-like branches

- * Native perennial with an extensive tuber-bearing, creeping root system.
- * Leafless fertile stems, light brown in color are about 0.3 metres tall with a spore-bearing cone (up to 4 cm) on top; fertile stems to 0.6 metres tall, produce whorls of green, four-angled leaf-like branches.
- * Over 15 species of *Equisetum* (horsetail) grow in British Columbia. Giant horsetail (*Equisetum telmateia*) is similar but taller and more robust throughout.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Hand pulling (repeated).

Herbicide: Casoron, Manage, MCPA.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

May be found growing in wetland areas. Check with your county Planning and Land Service Department first before attempting control.

HENBIT
(Lamium amplexicaule)



*Two-lipped
tubular flower*

- * Also called deadnettle, this annual with square, hairy stems grows weakly erect to 16 cm; leaves are opposite with the lower ones being long-stalked and the upper ones stalkless and clasping the stem.
- * Flowers are pink, purple, or white and borne in the axils of upper leaves.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation.

Herbicide: Roundup, Weedmaster.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

LAMB'S-QUARTERS (*Chenopodium album*)



Seedling showing grey mealy particles



*Inconspicuous flowers crowded
in leaf axils or at end of stems*

- * One of many similar “goosefoot” species, this heavily branched annual varies from 0.3 to over 2 metres in height; ridged green stems are often striped with purple; leaves are somewhat triangular in shape, greyish-green underneath and covered with mealy particles; the greenish, inconspicuous flowers are crowded in leaf axils or at end of stems.
- * One of the most common agricultural weeds.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation.

Herbicide: Weedmaster, Crossbow, Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

May be found growing in wetland areas. Check with your county Planning

20 and Land Service Department first before attempting control.

NIGHTSHADE (*Solanum species*)



Hairy nightshade



Black nightshade. Note short calyx



Hairy nightshade with calyx cupping the berry



Climbing nightshade



Climbing nightshade berries

- * Climbing nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*), also known as bittersweet; perennial with long branches trailing or climbing on other plants; lance-shaped leaves lobed at the base; bluish-purple flowers; immature green berries turning bright red.
- * Hairy nightshade (*Solanum sarrachoides*): annual to 0.6 metres tall; white flowers; dense covering of short hairs on leaves and stems; yellowish-brown berries at maturity; calyx cupped 2/3 around berry.
- * Black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*): annual to 0.9 metres tall; white flowers; smooth leaves; black to dark purple berries at maturity; short calyx does not cup the berry.
- * Young plants and immature berries are particularly poisonous.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation, mowing.

Herbicide: Weedmaster, Crossbow, Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

May be found growing in wetland areas. Check with your county Planning and Land Service Department first before attempting control.

PINEAPPLEWEED
(*Matricaria matricariodes*)



Cone-shaped flowers have strong pineapple odour when crushed

- * Erect annual growing to 0.3 m in height; leaves finely divided into narrow, feathery segments; cone-shaped or rounded yellow-greenish flowers (no ray flowers).
- * Pineapple odor evident when plants are crushed.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation.

Herbicide: Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

QUACKGRASS
(*Agropyron repens*)
(a.k.a. *Elytrigia repens*)



Sharp-pointed creeping rhizomes



Auricles clasp the stem

- * Aggressive perennial grass with long slender white rhizomes; rhizome tips are yellowish and sharp-pointed; base of leaf blade with claw-like appendage that clasps the stem; spikelets, up to 15 cm long, are in 2 long rows borne flatwise to the stem.
- * Easily regenerates from very small broken rhizome fragments making mechanical control difficult.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Difficult mowing, pulling etc.

Herbicide: Roundup or Casoron.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

May be found growing in wetland areas. Check with your county Planning and Land Service Department first before attempting control.

REDROOT PIGWEED *(Amaranthus retroflexus)*



Prominent veins on seedling



*Inconspicuous flowers with
spine-like bracts*

- * Coarse annual growing to 1 metre in height; leaves are long-stalked with prominent whitish veins; taproot is often pinkish to red; inconspicuous green flowers borne in spike-like clusters in leaf axils and at stem ends; stiff, spine-like bracts give the head a bristly appearance.
- * One of the most common agricultural weeds; can produce over 100,000 seeds/plant.

Control Methods:

Mechanical Control: Cultivation.

Herbicide: Weedmaster or Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

SHEPHERD'S-PURSE (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)



Deeply divided rosette leaves



Flattened, triangular seedpods

- * Annual to winter annual in the Mustard Family growing erect from 7 to 90 cm in height; white four-parted flowers; seeds develop in a triangular, flattened pod (purse); notched at the top.
- * Can produce over 33,000 seeds per plant.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation.

Herbicide: Weedmaster or Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

WATER HEMLOCK (*Cicuta douglasii*)



Hollow chambered root contains an extremely poisonous toxin (cicutoxin)

- * Highly toxic native plant in the Parsley Family.
- * Hollow, jointed stems grow 1 to 2 metres tall; oval leaflets with saw-toothed margins; leaflet veins tend to end at the base of the notch on leaf edge; enlarged taproot with horizontal hollow chambers. These contain an extremely poisonous oil (cicutoxin).

CAUTION: Clean knife blades well if used for cross-sectioning roots.

- * Found throughout British Columbia, and all of Western Washington in sloughs, wet meadows, streambanks, and other wet areas.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Hand pulling (Extreme Caution: Use rubber gloves).

CAUTION: Always read the label.

26 May be found growing in wetland areas. Check with your county Planning and Land Service Department first before attempting control.

WILD MUSTARD
(*Sinapsis arvensis*)
(a.k.a. *Brassica kaber*)



Seedling

- * Annual 0.3 to 1 metre tall with stiff hairs at least near base of stem; undersurface of leaves hairy on veins; bright yellow flowers; seedpods produced on thick stalks less than 7 mm long; ribbed lengthwise, up to 3.5 cm long with a constricted beak to 13mm.

Control Methods:

Mechanical: Cultivation.

Herbicide: Weedmaster or Roundup.

CAUTION: Always read the label.

NOTES