



MANAGING WEEDS AND INVASIVE PLANTS

Information for producers, rural property owners, hobby farmers and land developers in the Yukon

Many of our weeds and invasive plants in Canada have been introduced as crops, ornamental garden plants, parts of seed mixtures, or were used in revegetation projects. On developed land, weeds can be a problem and can reduce the establishment of crops, productivity of fields, and increase the risk of erosion by out-competing deeper rooted species. Some weeds and invasives can be poisonous and can harm livestock or pets.

What are weeds and invasive plants?

An invasive plant is defined as any species of plant that is not native to a particular ecosystem and poses negative impact on humans, animals, ecosystems and economy. These plants grow aggressively, spread very quickly and are highly competitive. Not all introduced plants are invasive. Some plants, even those native to the Yukon, become weedy under the right conditions. A weed is a plant out of place. The term noxious weed is used for plant species that are legally regulated.

Fortunately, most of the invasive plants causing serious harm in Canada will not survive in our northern climate. However, there are some aggressive invasive plant species, right here in the Yukon, which deserve our attention.

What we need to know:

In general, weeds take advantage of disturbed sites and spread quickly. The best way to control weeds on our property is not to let them get established. Weeds will invade most readily on disturbed or bare ground, but there are simple precautions you can take to minimize disturbance.

Make disturbed sites as small as possible. Watch for weeds and pull them out before they go to seed and get established. The best defense against weeds is a healthy field with as much diversity in your field as possible. Plan for how to introduce desirable plants and crops into your landscape to avoid weeds taking over.

By keeping weeds at bay, you can maintain nice lawns, good ground cover, and for farmers maintain purity and quality of crops and fields.

**PREVENTION
is always the best
approach in dealing
with weeds**

Foxtail Barley

Foxtail Barley (Hordeum jubatum) is considered a native species in most parts of the Yukon. It is, however, opportunistic and spreads rapidly across the landscape. Foxtail Barley is harmful to livestock, horses and pets; it reduces crop yields and forms monocultures.



Report to YISC

info@yukoninvasives.com

- Your contact information (Who is reporting? Name, email address, phone number)
- Sample/picture (Close-up and habitat photos or a sample)
- Infestation description (Distribution and size of the infestation)
- Location description (Carefully describe the location of the invasive species, including GPS coordinates (lat/long or UTM's and map datum). Without a detailed description it can be very difficult to relocate the population!)
- Reports on private property are kept confidential

More information:

Yukon Invasive Species Council

info@yukoninvasives.com

www.yukoninvasives.com

Agriculture Branch

agriculture@gov.yk.ca

(867) 667-5838



Creeping Thistle. To prevent the seeds from dispersing, remove, pack in garbage bags and dispose of them appropriately.

What can you do?

- Mechanical control can include hand-pulling, digging-up, tillage and mowing. Narrow-leaved Hawksbeard and Shepherd's Purse can successfully be removed by hand-pulling, good tillage will control these weeds on cultivated land. Mowing removes flower stems and may prevent seed set, it should be used with caution as it often encourages enhanced vegetative spread. Small infestations of hawkweed species can be dug-up. Mowing works well to control annual plants.
- Cultural weed control refers to any technique that involves maintaining field conditions such that weeds are less likely to become established and/or increase in number. Weeds can only exist if there is space for them. Thus, cultural practices for weed control are aimed at shading and crowding the young weed seedlings. Examples of cultural weed control would be crop rotation, avoiding overgrazing of pastures or rangeland, using well-adapted competitive forage species, and maintaining good soil fertility and appropriate soil moisture conditions.
- Spraying or chemical weed control refers to the application of herbicides to weeds or soil to control the germination or growth of the weed species. There is a wide range of prescribed herbicides available to control broad leaved weeds that leave the crop or lawn unaffected. Talk to your local agriculture rep for more information.
- Natural regeneration uses existing seeds and root sprouts to control weeds. Often new seed is required and native species can be hard to source. Collecting the native seed and stockpiling the thin soil portion in the disturbed site is the best practice for natural regeneration. If sourcing seed, talk to Yukon's Agriculture branch for advice on the best seed choices for your situation.
- Adequate soil fertilization with additional amendments, proper mowing practices, and judicious watering will reduce establishment of weedy species in newly established lawns, fields and pastures.
- Some weeds are easily recognizable while others are more difficult to identify and can be confused with native plants. Participate in the "Walk the Field" program or talk to your local agriculture rep. To learn more about invasive species visit www.yukoninvasives.com or contact info@yukoninvasives.com for help with identification of a species not familiar to you.

WALK YOUR FIELD program: If you are concerned about weeds, walk your property with a plant specialist!

Contact YISC for information.

Best practices to reduce introduction and spread of weeds:

- Weed seeds can be transported on vehicles and machinery, so clean or pressure wash machinery before it is brought onto your property. If purchasing equipment from outside the territory request it is washed before transport. Even clean equipment can collect unwanted seed over time.
- After construction or after disturbing areas, plant grass, trees or other vegetation, and implement weed control practices like pulling weeds, mowing and as required using herbicides.
- Maintain roadsides, these areas can quickly become a source of weeds that may migrate onto your field or property. Mowing, pulling and responsible herbicide use, are the best options to control weeds along roadsides. Herbicides should be the last option, and used when other methods didn't show the desired outcome.
- Manage grazing, an overgrazed field or pasture is more susceptible to weed invasion so know your grazing capacity and limit the number of animals on a field.
- If possible, buy local or certified weed free hay that comes from fields inspected for noxious weeds. Reduce the chance of introducing weeds by using Canada Certified Number 1 seed.
- Choose species for soil enhancement that don't cause problems in the Yukon (e.g. Sweetclover spreads quickly if not controlled through grazing and mowing).

Disposal of invasive plants

- All invasive plant parts should be placed in a clear plastic bag and left in the sun to kill the seed because many plants (e.g. thistles, knapweed and daisies) continue to produce seed even after pulling or dead-heading.
- Bring the bags to the landfill, where they should be buried shortly after being dropped off.
- Burning on your property is not the best solution: Some plant seeds (e.g. spotted knapweed) will only be killed in an incinerator.
- Do not "recycle" garden debris on your property, into a public park or natural area.
- Avoid composting invasive plants, as they can quickly re-establish themselves if not composted properly.

ADOPT RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



Seeds can be transported in soil and vegetation trapped in equipment

Growing Forward 2

A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment
Canada

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YISC
Yukon Invasive Species Council

WEEDS TO WATCH OUT FOR



Andrea Altherr

Narrow-leaved Hawksbeard
Crepis tectorum



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Common Tansy
Tanacetum vulgare



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Oxeye Daisy
Leucanthemum vulgare



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Perennial Sow Thistle
Sonchus arvensis



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Creeping Thistle
Cirsium arvense



Ben Leupler

Leafy Spurge
Euphorbia esula



Lloyd Freese

Orange Hawkweed
Hieracium aurantiacum



Marc Schuffert

Tall Hawkweed
Hieracium philoselloides



Tom Heuts, Bugwood.org

King Devil
Hieracium caespitosum



Ohio State University, Bugwood.org

Creeping Buttercup
Ranunculus repens



Rebekah D. Wallace, Bugwood.org

Chickweed
Stellaria media



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Shepherd's Purse
Capsella bursa-pastoris



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Siberian Peashrub
Caragana arborescens



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Yellow Clematis
Clematis tangutica



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Foxtail Barley
Hordeum jubatum