

# Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control Program

## Frequently Asked Questions about Noxious Weeds

### **What are noxious weeds?**

Noxious weeds are non-native plants that have been introduced accidentally or as ornamentals in peoples' gardens. Some are poisonous to humans and livestock and most grow rapidly and are extremely difficult to control. They can reduce crop yields, displace desirable plant species, destroy beneficial native habitat, damage recreational opportunities, clog waterways and diminish land values.

### **Why are noxious weeds a problem?**

- ❑ Non-native invasive species (plants and animals) cost the US an estimated \$137 billion per year due to environmental damage, public health hazards and economic losses to livestock and agriculture.
- ❑ Exotic weeds are spreading at about 4,600 acres per day on Federal lands in the West
- ❑ Between 1985-1995 the spread of exotic plant species increased on public rangelands in the West from 4 million to 17 million acres.
- ❑ Noxious weeds are a leading contributing cause of species endangerment.
- ❑ Purple loosestrife, which chokes out wildlife habitat and clogs waterways, now invades wetlands in 48 states at an estimated cost of \$45 million a year for control and lost land use.
- ❑ In Washington State, the Department of Fish & Wildlife spent close to \$1.3 million dollars in 1998 to control spartina, purple loosestrife, and saltcedar.

### **Where are noxious weeds found in Kitsap County?**

Noxious weeds are found everywhere in Kitsap County-in urban, suburban and rural areas; on developed and undeveloped land, farmland, forest and other natural open spaces as well as in lakes, rivers, streams, and in Puget Sound.

### **How is a plant designated as noxious weed?**

The State Noxious Weed Board, a group of citizen volunteers representing all parts of the state, annually adopts and publishes a list of weeds to be controlled or eradicated based on public comment and input from county weed boards.

### **What is the Noxious Weed Control Program?**

The Kitsap County Weed Control Program focuses on education, prevention, technical assistance and control of noxious weeds through voluntary compliance. Preventing the spread of weeds is more effective and less costly than eradication.

### **What is the Noxious Weed Control Board and what does it do?**

The Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control Board was established to direct the state mandated program as required by the court order. The board consists of five unpaid citizen volunteers who represent five districts that cover the entire county. The board meets monthly and provides vision and direction to the weed control program. While the program staff are technically county employees, they are hired, directed and supervised by the Citizen board.

### **What services does the Noxious Weed Control Program provide?**

- ❑ Surveys and maps noxious weed infestations county-wide to identify the full extent of the weed problem and to detect infestations at an earlier and more preventive stage.
- ❑ Provides educational services to the public through informational workshops and publications.
- ❑ Provides technical assistance to the public on weed identification, control and eradication.
- ❑ Facilitates weed management efforts by working with volunteer and landowner groups.

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