

# Noxious and Invasive Weed Update

## Plant Protection and Weed Control

*Fall 2021*

### Special points of interest:

- In 1883 the Legislature passed a law requiring "Road Overseers" to control Cockleburs, Rocky Mountain sand burs, burdocks, sunflower (now our state flower), Canada thistles and other "obnoxious weeds".

## Aquatic Nuisance Species

Introduced exotic plants do not just invade the land. They also take advantage of aquatic habitats that provide the type of environment they are used to back in their native ranges that do not have the insect pests or diseases that regulate their growth or the competitive plants that control their ability to invade new areas.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has taken on the responsibility of managing these invaders. They are working diligently to identify the lakes, ponds

and streams that are infested, controlling them where they find them, and most importantly, to keep them from spreading into new waterbodies by fisherman, their bait, and their boats.

Some of the plant species that are considered aquatic nuisance species are Hydrilla and Eurasian watermilfoil, both of which are fully aquatic which means they need to grow in the water itself. Purple loosestrife, phragmites and salt cedar (tamarisk), are riparian species which

need wet environments, such as the edges of lakes or rivers, to survive.

And these aquatic invaders are not limited to just plants. There are fish, including the Asian Carp, White Perch, Round Goby, Ruffe, and Rudd; mollusks, like the Zebra Mussel, New Zealand Mudsnaill and crayfish (Rusty Crayfish) as well.

Find a map and learn how to identify, report and prevent them at <https://protectkswaters.org>.

## A New Method for Local Protection

### Inside this issue:

	1
A New Method for Local Protection	1
There's an App for That: A New Series	2
Control Corner:	2
Invasive Species Spotlight: Oxeye Daisy	3

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With the new noxious weed regulations comes a new method for each county to determine which invasive species should be declared as noxious within its boundaries. Previously, the legislature developed a list of species from which the counties could choose. The new weed law eliminated that list and now allows the counties to select the species that are impacting the local agricultural and natural environments the most.

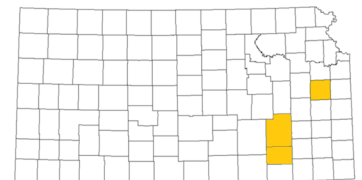
Once the county determines which species it needs to list, it must follow a couple of steps before it can proceed. First, it must develop a control program for each selected species.

This control program is similar to those developed for the statewide species but is specific to that county's needs. Once this is done, they will request approval from the Secretary of Agriculture for approval and, once granted, the species becomes noxious which means all landowners must control the listed species on their lands and that cost share chemicals are available to help control them.

So far, three counties have asked for, and received, approval to list a total of three different species as noxious. Franklin County was first when they listed both common and cut-leaf teasels. Elk County fol-

lowed with the same two species and then Greenwood listed common teasel and Caucasian bluestem, one of the Old World bluestem species. Other counties are currently considering doing the same.

If you live in any of these counties, or if your county adds a species to their county-option noxious weed list, contact your county weed director for information on how these listings may affect you.



## There's an App for That: A New Series

I'm sure by now that you have heard the term "There's an app for that". Well, that pertains to weed management also. There are a number of smart phone apps available for use in various aspects of noxious, invasive, agricultural and garden weed control and management. In this series I will cover a few of those that are available for use on most smart phones. As I use an Android phone, I will be able to speak to apps that are available for those phones better than others, but I will try to let you know if they are available for iPhones as well.

These apps can be broken down into various categories such as plant identification, herbicide application tools, weather forecasting, and others. I will pick two or three apps from each category and try to explain how they work and point out the pros and cons of each. I cannot guarantee that I will be able to review every weed control re-

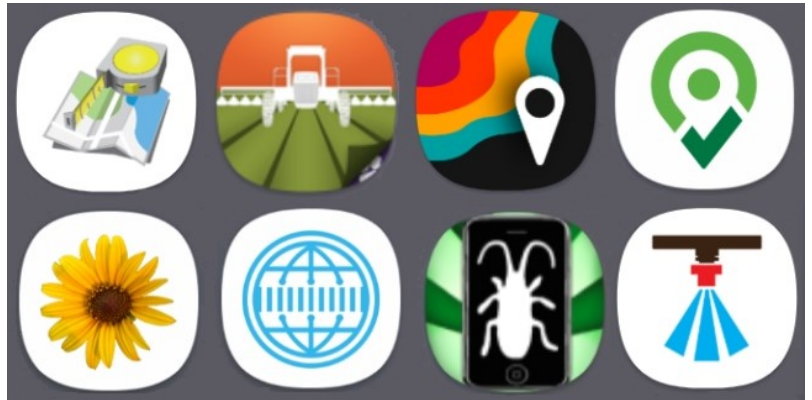
lated app out there, I will do my best to show a sample of the different types that are available. If you know of any that I miss, please let me know, and I will do my best to include them.

Some of the apps will probably be of more use to some than others, of course, but all of them will, directly or indirectly be of use in controlling or managing noxious and invasive weeds.

The first category I will review, in the next newsletter, will be those apps that help identify plants. After all, if

you cannot identify the plants you see, you will not know which ones need to be controlled and which can be enjoyed as native or desirable plants.

While I may give some apps better reviews than others, I will not recommend any particular apps and the opinions expressed in these articles are mine alone and do not represent those of the Kansas Department of Agriculture or the State of Kansas.



## Control Corner: Controlling Aquatic Invasive Species

Controlling invasive species that grow in or around water is a little different than controlling them in your yard or fields. To go along with the specialized environment, you need specialized herbicides. As you are probably familiar with herbicides labeled for use in corn, wheat, range and pasture or roadsides, you will need to find some labeled for aquatic sites in order to control plants growing in, or near, the water.

For example, I'm sure you have heard of glyphosate, and have probably even applied some in your yard or on your tolerant corn. Well, it is also effective against several aquatic or riparian weeds. Because of that, a version of glyphosate was created that can be applied in or near the water. Just don't mix up the two.

If you would like to hire someone to spray your pond or other waterbodies, be sure to check to see if they are certified with the Kansas Department of Agriculture as a Commercial Pesticide Applicator in Category 5 which is for aquatic pest control. Anyone getting paid to apply aquatic herbicides is required to hold this certification.

As always when applying herbicides, or any other type of pesticide, be sure to read and follow the label's instructions. The label is the law and applying against label instructions is a violation of the law.

Herbicides are not the only way to control aquatic weeds. It is possible to "mow" them down. Using a thatching rake or other stiff metal tool that you can reach out into the water with,

quickly drag it through the weeds close to the bottom, pulling the weeds out of the substrate. You have to be careful to remove all of the plants you pull up because many aquatic plants can grow new plants from even the smallest piece of an old one. Also, if you leave a lot of dead plants in your fishing pond, the bacteria eating the dead material will use up all the oxygen in the water, causing the fish to suffocate and die.

There are a few biological control agents that target specific invasive aquatic weeds, but I am not aware of any being used in Kansas at this time.

Also, because there are no aquatic species on the noxious weed list, there are no herbicides available for cost share.



*Plant Protection and Weed Control*

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Plant Protection and Weed Control staff work to ensure the health of the state's native and cultivated plants by excluding or controlling destructive pests, diseases and weeds. Staff examine and analyze pest conditions in crop fields, rangelands, greenhouses and nurseries. Action taken to control potential infestations of new pests, whether they are insects, plants diseases or weeds, is beneficial to the economy and the environment.

#### **Our mission is to:**

- Exclude or control harmful insects, plant diseases, and weeds;
- Ensure Kansas plants and plant products entering commerce are free from quarantined pests;
- Provide customers with inspection and certification services.

## **Invasive Species Spotlight:**

### **Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)**

One of the most prevalent aquatic invasive weeds in Kansas is Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*). It is a submersed (grows underwater) perennial weed that can grow so thick that it has been known to bring boats to a halt. Unfortunately for Kansas, it prefers lakes, ponds and slow-moving rivers, which we have in spades.

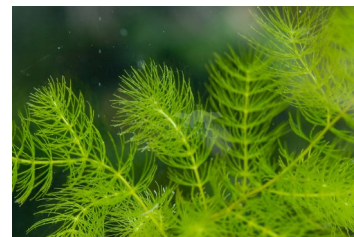
The olive green plant has delicate, feather-like leaves that grow in groups of three

to five in whorls around the stem. These leaves are compound, which means that smaller leaflets grow out of a main stem, and they are limp and fall back against the stem when out of the water

It has a closely-related, native cousin, the shortspike, or northern, watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum sibiricum*) that can be found in scattered populations throughout the state's lakes and ponds. While the two plants look similar, the native water-

milfoil has stiffer leaves that stay erect when out of the water and its leaflets are of different lengths, while the leaflets of the exotic species are of the same length. Control of Eurasian watermilfoil, like all aquatic plants, is more difficult than controlling terrestrial weeds because of the need to use specialized herbicides. You can read more about controlling aquatic weeds in the Control Corner section of this newsletter.

The best herbicides to use on Eurasian watermilfoil are 2,4-D, fluridone or triclopyr. Remember though, you must use herbicides with aquatic labels. The chemicals you use in your fields cannot legally be used in aquatic situations.



Monroe Co. Soil & Water Conservation District