

Noxious Weed Report for May 9

Hi, this is the Noxious Weed Report for May 9.

This week, I'd like to share an interesting article we received from Montana State University, which is titled "What's Up? Buttercup!" Needless to say, the article is about Bur buttercup, one of the first weeds to flower in the spring. Bur buttercup is a non-native annual that often forms a carpet of yellow along roadways, parking lots, and other disturbed areas. Flowers, which have 2-5 yellow petals, last about 3-4 weeks and then form bur-like seed heads.

These burs can cling to animal fur or human clothing, and they become very prickly as they dry. Other common names for bur buttercup are hornseed buttercup or curvedseed buttercup, both describing the plant's bur-like anatomy. This species is a "dwarf" plant, growing only 1-3 inches tall. It has basal leaves that are less than 1-4 inches, and the leaves are divided into finger-like segments. Also, the leaves and stems are pale green and have short, woolly hairs.

Although Bur buttercup is often overlooked, and is not on the Okanogan County Noxious Weed List, it can certainly become an agricultural pest, and is toxic to livestock, especially sheep. It typically grows in areas where little to no other vegetation is growing. Bur buttercup can be managed with an appropriate herbicide in bare ground environments, but remember that it flowers very early in the spring. In other areas, limiting disturbance and nurturing the growth of other vegetation is recommended.

I'd also like to remind everyone that we, along with the WSU Extension Office, are completely moved into our new location. You can find us all in the Okanogan County Public Works Building, at 1234 Second Ave. South, in Okanogan. The entrance to both our office and the WSU Extension Office is at the north end of the parking lot. Please stop in anytime, just to say hi and check out our new space, or to help yourself to a variety of noxious weed brochures and identification guides.

We'd also like to encourage everyone to look over our website for lots of useful information and for links to other helpful resources at www.okanogancounty.org/nw. And please remember that we are always happy to help with identification of noxious weeds. You can email pictures to noxiousweeds@co.okanogan.wa.us, or bring samples in to our office. We would also be happy to meet with you at your property to help with noxious weed identification, along with helping to decide on your best control options.