

From: Susan Gemperle-Abdo sabdo@cableone.net
Subject: Boise Height News: Important Fire and Noxious Weed info!
Date: June 5, 2017 at 11:30 PM
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Hello Neighbors. *News on two vital topics for early summer: weeds & fire!*

As Fire Season is nearing, the time is ripe for **making our Neighborhood more fire safe**. It is also the prime time to **eradicate noxious weeds** before they seed and spread. These weeds overtake our native vegetation, and increase the amount of fuel for fire. Let's all work together to continue to make our neighborhood a great place to live.

Build Your Fire Breaks Now & Fire Wise News

Our neighborhood has begun the first steps in becoming a Certified Firewise Community. Within the next few months you will be receiving written educational materials on how to create a fire safe zone around your home and neighborhood. Unfortunately, we were not awarded a chipper grant this year but we are looking into some other grant sources and hopefully we will be able to fund a chipper this Fall. **Visit these links for more information on how to make your home more Firewise.**

[Firewise landscape design tips](#) , [Firewise home maintenance](#) , [Firewise home remodel/building materials](#) , [Firewise Landscape Maintenance](#).

Firewise Tips/Tasks for June

Fire breaks: If you live adjacent to open space creating a fire break is essential for the safety of your home and family as well as your neighbors. **June is the month to get this done!**

Firewood: move any piles of Firewood at least 30 ft. from your home

Gutters and roofs: Remove all combustible materials from roofs and gutters, as well as under decks, stairways, and overhangs.

If you would like to be involved in the Firewise Certification Program contact one of our committee members: Terri Muse tlmusejd@gmail.com, Susan Abdo sabdo@cableone.net or Barb Frizzell bfrizz53@gmail.com

Adrian Pfisterer on Summit Ridge heads up Boise Heights' GOAT HEAD PATROL –

I'd like to call everyone's attention to a particularly **nasty noxious weed commonly known the 'goat head'** (also known as puncture vine). A single goat head plant can have hundreds of hard thorny seeds perfectly evolved for evolutionary success: the seed spreads by becoming stuck in whatever touches it and is transported to new locations. Twenty years ago, puncture vine was not in Boise Heights. It was brought in by car tires, bikes and animals. Past neighborhood volunteers have removed goat heads both mechanically and with controlled Round Up spraying. Two spots, with diligent work over six years, are now free of goatheads!

They are just now emerging so it's the perfect time to make a dent in the population. It is the perfect time because no special tools are needed when they are small like they are now...one can kick the plants loose with their foot and kill them, and since they are an annual there is no need to get the root. And they have not yet developed seeds.

Volunteers are needed to remove the baby (emerging) plant before the 'puncture' seed awn forms. About 300 newly emerged puncture vine plants were removed recently by Kay Hummel, Charlie and Jeff Fereday in Powder House Gulch and on Mountain Cove Road - just with toe kicks.

Please contact Adrian to help. Cell: **208-484-2302**, Email: adrian63@gmail.com. Adrian can coordinate what areas need attention. It really can be as simple as educating yourself on what the emerging plants look like and kicking them while you're out on your normal walks around the neighborhood.

Please read the **attached illustrated PDF on 4 Problem Plants** in Boise Heights, with photos, to learn more. Or, search for puncture vine plant images on <http://images.google.com> .

Help Out Now on this worthy project. It does not take a lot of time to make a difference! We have scuffle hoes to loan out, too.

An initial list of targets, with a few committed volunteers, so far:

- Summit Ridge & Sherman Hollow areas: **Adrian Pfisterer**
- Empty lot across Crestline from Somerset Hills apartments: **Adrian Pfisterer**
- upper Claremont Drive from Crestline intersection to Crestline Trail parking area: (volunteer needed)
- Crestline Trail parking area on Claremont: (volunteer needed)
- far west end of Claremont Drive: (volunteer needed)
- Ridgeline Trail into Morley's Canyon: (volunteer needed)
- top of Powder House Gulch at Promontory: **Glenn Weyrich, chief goat head eradicator of many years**
- Powder House trail continuance, down to Military Reserve & parking area: **Maria & Don Essig**
- around new Boise Hills Park, off Montclair: (volunteer needed)
- Elephant Rock Trail from Mountain Cove: **Charlie & Jeff Fereday & Kay Hummel**

Thank you so much for helping out!

Other BHNA Problem Weeds & Dangerous Plants

Three more plants to eradicate from yards are **Ornamental Yew** -- a landscaping evergreen, toxic to humans and wildlife -- plus **White Top** and **Donkey Tail Spurge** (Euphorbia). You may recall that eleven elk munched on yew from homes near Table Rock last winter and died within hours. It only takes about 2 Tablespoons ingested to kill an elk or deer! Our neighbor, Angela Rossman, is leading a statewide effort on poisonous yew. Two nurseries (Franz Witte & Far West) are helping out by supplying alternatives, see attachment for more info and photos.

Kay Hummel, 420 E. Crestline, coordinates Boise Heights Invasive Plants sub-group. Call her at **631-**

7/10/14 If you have questions about dangerous weeds, identification, etc. [& Adrian about goat-heads] Additional help is available through Ada County Weed Control Services, 287-7080. Their website has a "Request For Service" form that will get a field inspector out to help you with infestations. <https://adacounty.id.gov/Weed-Control/Noxious-Weeds-Overview> Again, please read & save the attached PDF on four plant species of special concern in our Neighborhood.

Happy Summer!

Susan Abdo, President, Boise Heights Neighborhood Association (BHNA)

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484-7375



Problem Plants
BHNA.pdf



Untitled attachment
00009.html

4 PROBLEM PLANTS IN BOISE HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD • 2017

EUPHORBIA – Donkey-Tail Spurge *Euphorbia myrsinites*.

Unfortunately, this still is sold as a rock garden – xeric plant by some nurseries. This ‘decorative’ spurge is **extremely** invasive and essentially is a caustic, troublesome weed – it has escaped into Boise Heights’ gullies, crowding out native vegetation.

Milky white fluid in the plant causes bad skin rashes; many children and fire-break workers have had severe blisters. Extremely caustic in eyes. A cousin plant, *Euphorbia esula* (leafy spurge), already is on Idaho’s Noxious Weeds List and cannot be sold because it threatens crops.



Euphorbia myrsinites
Donkey-Tail Spurge
Flower number: 1,234,567
USDA Zone: 5-9

The Donkey-Tail Spurge is an evergreen, succulent perennial. It makes sprawling or trailing stems of spiraling grey-blue leaves, with clusters of chartreuse-yellow flowers appearing through the spring months. This will grow in most any sunny area, but does particularly well in hot, dry sites with poor soil. Looks terrific in a rock garden or rock wall. Also worth trying in tubs or mixed containers. Interplant this with Veronica ‘Georgia Blue’, for a riot of yellow and sapphire blue. Inclined to self seed prolifically; remove unwanted seedlings as they appear. As a result of its self seeding, some jurisdictions have banned this plant as a noxious weed. This is not usually a problem in regions with significant rainfall, but check local restrictions before planting. **CAUTION:** skin and eye irritant/toxic if eaten; wear gloves when handling.

Further details for
Euphorbia myrsinites

Donkey-tail spurge spreads by vigorous rootstalks and self-seeding – at times it spits out seed. BHNA recommends removal of Donkey-tail spurge from the few yards where it now grows. And, we’d love to see this species added to the state noxious weed list. Don’t let your garden service plant it! There are many successful sedums and other dry-tolerant shrub species to replace spurge in your landscape. Easy to remove when soil is damp – wear boots, gloves, long pants & sleeves and eye protection. Be sure to get all the plant and root. Or consult a qualified applicator service for big infestations.

ORNAMENTALS – JAPANESE & ENGLISH YEWS *Taxus cuspidate* & *Taxus baccata*

Yew needles

Lynn Kinter photo





ORNAMENTAL YEW - aka Japanese or Chinese Yews; English Yew

This evergreen's toxic alkaloids can poison pets, humans, and all wildlife, and cause death. We urge everyone to take them out of their foothills landscapes because of our resident deer and occasional elk. Blaine County previously banned the sale of yews due to elk deaths there. Our great Promontory Road neighbor Angela Rossman (angelarossmann@yahoo.com) has initiated a negotiated rule-making with the Idaho Dept. of Agriculture to add ornamental yews to the State Noxious Weed List. The Ada County Fish & Game League and many citizens and sportsmen support this. It will take until December to complete this process, if Angela's petition is successful.

In the meantime, wrap your yews, or dig out yews completely. Take them to Far West or Franz Witte nurseries for substitute plants. Far West (owner Dennis Fix has a replacement program with \$30 vouchers; 853-4000) or contact Franz Witte Nursery, 853-0808 on their progressive policy. Also, Costco and Home Depot have completely stopped selling yews - please thank them!



You can listen to a May 16th story on the yew problem at this link on Boise State Public Radio: <http://boisestatepublicradio.org/post/why-popular-landscaping-plant-may-be-added-idahos-noxious-weed-list#stream/0>

Check out this excellent story, "All About Yew," online, at www.idahonativeplants.org – the March Issue of Sage Notes, p. 9. <http://idahonativeplants.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/SageNotesMarch2017.pdf> The author is Lynn Kinter, a Fish & Game botanist, 334-3700; her story suggests numerous alternative shrubs for yews.

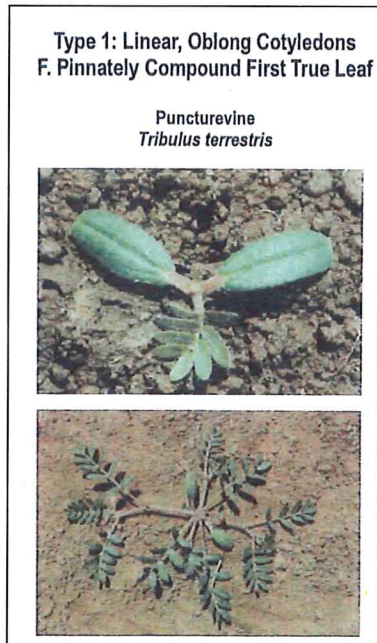
There's a Facebook page to learn more about the yew toxicity: *Toxic Yew Plant Poisoning Prevention*

PUNCTURE VINE – aka goat head *Tribulus terrestris* L

Twenty years ago, Puncture Vine, a state listed Noxious Weed, was not in Boise Heights. It entered our neighborhood via car tires, bikes and animals. Volunteers have removed goat heads mechanically (pulling & bagging/or chopping off) and also with controlled Round Up spraying. The best time to dig it is right after the new plant emerges in June and before the thorns – called awns -- are formed.

Please ask your visitors not to park cars on infestations -- such as masses that sometimes grow next to Claremont Drive or in parking areas -- since automobile tires will carry the thorny awns with seeds throughout the neighborhood and to other parts of Boise – this plant thrives

on soil disturbance! Puncture vine is a low (flat) prostrate plant, with spreading, green leaves and small yellow flowers. **It looks like this when first emerging in June – with maturation by late June on into mid July:**



And when flowering, puncture vine forms large mats with small yellow flowers:



Puncture vine is easy to remove in the baby-emergent phase, June – early July. **On your walks, just kick the plant top off with the toe of your shoe or boot;** or, use a hoe or other mechanical device. We have scuffle hoes you can borrow – call Adrian at 484-2302. If you are unsure about other green low plants, *the very dark green ones with no flowers and the frilly, green prostrate plant with pink flowers are not puncture vine. Several folks can help you identify.*

By July and August – its small yellow flowers transform into sharp puncture thorns, a terrible problem for people, dogs and bike tires. When you dig puncture vine up then, take heavy gloves & a box, bag or trash can -- scoop up all thorns as well as the entire plant. Maybe take a dustpan or a vacuum. **YOU DO NOT NEED TO DIG UP THE ROOT OF PUNCTURE VINE – it is an annual.** Just remove the main plant & thorns.



Ridding the neighborhood of the parent seed source takes us to a better future → each puncturing awn contains hundreds of seeds viable in soil for 5 - 7 years. **Thanks for helping!**

WHITE TOP – aka Hoary Cress *Cardaria draba* (L.)

This state-listed Noxious Weed flowers May through June. You often see this showy, flat-topped white weed, 16” to 24” high, in large numbers across uncultivated lots and roadway



margins, *but only in a few places in Boise Heights*. It is common on alkaline, disturbed soils and out competes other species once it takes hold.

Manual control is **not** recommended where White Top infestation is bigger than 4 by 4 feet – one needs to remove the entire weed system and extensive roots. Cutting or pulling won't do it in a big problem area.

Recommended: grow competitive grasses after an aggressive herbicide treatment by professionals. Now is a great time to get rid of the patches we have - - home-owners need to eradicate Listed Noxious species under Idaho law.

There's about 60 listed Noxious Weed Species in Idaho with 57 of these plants officially listed in Ada County.

➔ — *So, what does a listed Noxious Weed mean for me?*¹



Questions? Identifications?

Don't hesitate to contact Kay Hummel, Charlie or Jeff Fereday
kayhum@cableone.net 631-7704; Charlie, 921-5365; Jeff, 484-0256.
+ Adrian, 484-2302 – re puncture vine

¹ Under **Idaho Code 22-2407**, Idaho property owners carry the primary burden of controlling noxious weeds on their land. County Weed Superintendents may only treat noxious weeds on private property if the landowner fails to fully mitigate the situation. In such instances, the County will treat the noxious weeds and bill the property owner for the weed control efforts.

Idaho Code lists 68 plant species as noxious weeds because they have the potential to threaten public health, crops, livestock, public lands and private property. Early detection and rapid control of noxious weeds is the top priority of Ada County Weed Control because these plants:

- Can be poisonous to humans and livestock.
- Displace vegetation that is food for wildlife.
- Contribute to the fuel load that leads to devastating wildland fires.
- Invade fields and pastures, decreasing yields, complicating harvesting and contaminating food and seeds.
- Lower land values because they adversely affect land usability, or are very difficult and expensive to eliminate or control.
- Interfere with water channels to negatively impact irrigation, power generation and recreation.

Ada County is home to 57 state-designated noxious weeds. **Ada County's five most prevalent weeds are Canada Thistle, Scotch Thistle, Puncturevine, Whitetop, and Poison Hemlock.** In our foothills yards, besides Puncture Vine and White Top, we should also check on infestations of Field Bindweed (Morning Glory), Scotch Thistle (pink), Spotted Knapweed. Please immediately report the rare Yellow Star Thistle – the latter is a huge problem invading the Salmon River corridor and other parts of Idaho. For pictures & guidance: <https://adacounty.id.gov/Portals/0/WPM/Weed/Doc/Noxious%20Weed%20Guide%202015.pdf>