

# KC Weed News – June 2010

## King County, Washington

(<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/weed-news.aspx>)

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### Weed of the Month: [Dalmatian Toadflax](#) (*Linaria dalmatica* ssp. *dalmatica*), [Class B Noxious Weed](#) in King County, Washington

Driving east on I-90 for a Memorial Day family hike, I couldn't help but notice the tall, narrow stems of Dalmatian toadflax waving in the breeze along the highway. The snapdragon-like flowers are pale yellow compared with the golden yellow Scotch broom flowers. And the waxy, heart-shaped blue-green leaves stand out from the bright green grass of the median and road shoulder. This introduction from Europe is a much more common sight east of the Cascades and it looks out of place on the wet side of the mountains, where its drought-resistant leaves and deep roots don't give it the same advantage as they do in the hot summers of eastern Washington.

In dry parts of our state, Dalmatian toadflax is a serious pest of rangeland and other open grassland habitats, taking over vast areas and pushing out native and beneficial species. Although this plant is very hard to get rid of anywhere it grows, we don't have nearly the same problems with it here with our wetter climate, where toadflax isn't as competitive. In western Washington, Dalmatian toadflax is mostly seen on highways, railroads and other dry, exposed sites where seeds are spread from east of the mountains and competing vegetation is sparse or less vigorous. However, there are some rocky banks and more remote trails where Dalmatian toadflax has been able to get a foothold, and it has the potential to invade some of our more sensitive and less common plant communities on hillsides and mountain meadows.

Originally brought from the Mediterranean region of Europe for its pretty flowers, Dalmatian toadflax is currently found in at least 34 states in the U.S. and most of the Canadian provinces. It is most widely distributed in the western U.S. and Canada, where it has significantly reduced livestock production on infested pastures and rangeland. The first records of the species in Washington date back to the 1920's, when the species was collected near Spokane (1926) and Bingen (1927).

Dalmatian toadflax, called both *Linaria dalmatica* and *Linaria genistifolia* in the literature, is a close cousin of another European import named [yellow toadflax](#) or butter and eggs (*Linaria vulgaris*), that is widespread throughout North America. Yellow toadflax is smaller and has narrow, linear leaves instead of the wide, clasping, heart-shaped leaves of Dalmatian toadflax. Although both toadflaxes are noxious weeds in Washington, yellow toadflax is so widespread in King County that there is no requirement to control it. Dalmatian toadflax is much less common and control is required in King County.

Because of its deep, tenacious roots, ability to spread both by seed and vegetatively, and overall toughness, Dalmatian toadflax is very hard to control. It isn't vulnerable to most herbicides, so carefully digging it up is probably the most effective solution for isolated plants. For larger patches, such as along highways, herbicides that have shown effectiveness on this plant can be used, although a single treatment is never enough. Some areas require years of work. I still see toadflax in many of the same places on the highways that I did when I first started working for the noxious weed program in 1997, and I know that WSDOT has been trying to control it for all those years. For even larger populations or in remote areas, there are biocontrol insects that help to keep this plant in check, although they won't get rid of it entirely and don't always establish well, especially in the highly disturbed areas where this plant often first appears. Early detection and a quick, effective response is really the best approach for Dalmatian toadflax.

If you see Dalmatian toadflax in King County, please let us know by reporting it [online](#) or contacting our program at 206-296-0290 or by [email](#). For more information on this plant, see [our website](#).

## Weed Tips for June

**Watch out for [garlic mustard](#): new infestation found in Coal Creek Natural Area in South Bellevue.** Over an acre of garlic mustard had gone un-noticed in the woods of Coal Creek Natural Area until a Bellevue employee smelled the distinct garlic odor wafting through the woods and went to investigate. He had experience with this plant from another park in Bellevue and knew what he was looking for. Added to last year's findings in east King County, this site makes it even more important to look for this plant everywhere in the county. We have also found new sites in Seattle, including one large patch in Magnolia's Kiwanis Ravine near Discovery Park. If you don't know this plant yet, please check out our website or visit our weed booth at one of our events in June or July (see below for dates and locations). Please email us at [noxious.weeds@kingcounty.gov](mailto:noxious.weeds@kingcounty.gov) or call us at 206-296-0290 if you do find this plant anywhere in the county so we can move quickly to stop it. Garlic mustard is forming seed pods this month but there is still time to pull plants before the seeds mature.

## Watch What You Eat – [Poison Hemlock](#) Poisonings on the Rise

A woman from Tacoma died this spring, apparently from eating poison-hemlock leaves in her salad. A man from Bellingham ended up in the hospital seriously ill after eating a marinade with poison-hemlock roots in it. Neither person knew that they were eating the plant that killed Socrates. In fact, many people don't realize just how common poison-hemlock is around here or know to recognize it. This very poisonous plant is in the carrot family, the same family as many edible plants. This makes it even more dangerous. People collecting plants in the wild or harvesting from their garden are very likely to mistake poison-hemlock for its many edible cousins. The leaves of first year rosettes resemble parsley and other edible greens. The large, taproot looks like a big, white carrot or parsnip. The only thing that really sets poison-hemlock apart is the large, hollow stem with red or purple blotches on it. Even young stems have red-

purple blotches on them. Also, the stems aren't hairy like some members of the carrot family. They also aren't entirely red or purple; they are green with irregular purple spots. Also, when poison-hemlock flowers in its second year, it is very tall – up to 10 feet (shorter in dry soil).

**Spread the word to friends and neighbors about [giant hogweed](#).** It's sad to hear about children who get burns from playing with hogweed stems, or gardeners using a weed whacker on hogweed and getting blisters all over their bare legs. If you have giant hogweed in your neighborhood, make sure to tell everyone to watch out for this plant and to call the noxious weed program for help if they don't know how to remove it safely. Check the [noxious weed map](#) for King County to see if it has been seen in your area (<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/maps.aspx>). This month, hogweed's large, thick, purple-blotched stalks will be rising above the giant jagged leaves and starting to flower. Digging up hogweed when it is full grown is tricky. Make sure to wear gloves and long sleeves and pants and carefully cut down the flowering stem without getting the juice on you. Then remove the leaves enough to get access to the roots. Dig up as much root as you can, at least 6 inches deep if possible. If there is a risk of anyone coming into contact with the plant or if there are flowers, place the hogweed in a sturdy plastic bag and discard in your garbage. Please [contact our program](#) if you find this plant or need assistance removing it.

**Pull [tansy ragwort](#) before you see yellow.** Bolting tansy ragwort is taking energy from the roots. This means weak roots that are easy to pull out of the ground. If you pull it before the yellow flowers open, it can be left to compost without risk of seeds forming. However, make sure to keep pulled plants away from livestock – tansy ragwort remains toxic when dry and is more palatable after being pulled. Look for tansy ragwort anywhere it was growing last year – seeds last up to 16 years in the soil, so you are sure to get new plants where it was last year. Remember to look for low-growing rosettes as well as tall, bolting plants.

**Act quickly to stop flowering weeds from going to seed.** We've had a cool, wet spring this year. This means large, leafy weeds that are generally slower to flower than usual. This gives us more time to find them before it's too late, but if the weather turns sunny, we're sure to see weeds flowering in a hurry. When weeds are flowering, it means there's no time to lose and it's also the easiest time to spot hard-to-find weeds. Noxious weeds that will be flowering soon (or have already started) include: [Dalmatian toadflax](#), [spotted knapweed](#), [meadow knapweed](#), [milk thistle](#), [orange hawkweed](#), [yellow hawkweed](#), and [poison-hemlock](#). Many more noxious weeds will start flowering later in June including: [diffuse knapweed](#), [sulfur cinquefoil](#), [giant hogweed](#), [tansy ragwort](#) and [goatsrue](#).

**Report [designated Class A and B noxious weeds](#) on roads and trails.** County, city and state crews are all busy working on noxious weeds along roadsides, trails and parks. However, even with their hard work and our own efforts to send them locations of regulated noxious weeds, we can't be everywhere and some sites get missed. If you see a patch of tansy ragwort or any other regulated noxious weed growing on public land or a roadside, please contact our office and we will make sure the right agency or property owner gets notified quickly. We can be reached at 206-296-0290 or you can use our online infestation report form, <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/infestations-form.aspx>.

**Cool, wet springs are a great time to pull weeds.** Pulling weeds right now is very satisfying. The weeds are big and leafy and easy to find and grab hold of. Even better, the roots come up more or less intact this time of year with much less work. The soil is still moist and loose and

roots don't break off like they will later in the season. This means much less re-growth. And because the soil is damp (and getting damper with all our rain), mulching where you clear weeds will keep the soil nice and moist for your garden plants all summer long.

### **Learn How to Control [Knotweed](#) (and Qualify to Borrow a Stem Injector)**

We will be holding five workshops for homeowners on knotweed control in June and July. We want to show what's involved in effectively getting this plant controlled and how and where to use different methods. It can be frustrating to keep trying to get rid of knotweed and not have it work, year after year. Hopefully we can help you figure out what to do that will work better. These workshops will be very hands on and interactive. We will also be providing specific training on using the knotweed stem injectors effectively. Participants in this training will be eligible to borrow our stem injectors for use on their own land. We are targeting five watersheds this year: the Snoqualmie Basin, Cedar River, Green River-Soos Creek, Bear Creek, and the South Fork Skykomish River Watersheds. However, everyone is welcome to attend any of the workshops; you don't have to live in one of these watersheds. The more people working on controlling knotweed, the less damage it will be doing in our county.

The workshops are all free and open to the public. There is no need to register but feel free to contact Sasha Shaw ([sasha.shaw@kingcounty.gov](mailto:sasha.shaw@kingcounty.gov)) or Frances Lucero ([frances.lucero@kingcounty.gov](mailto:frances.lucero@kingcounty.gov)) for more information or call us at 206-296-0290. See our [website](#) for more details.

#### **Knotweed Workshop Dates and Locations:**

- June 10, 7-8:30 p.m., [Fall City Library](#), 33415 SE 42nd Place, Fall City WA 98024
- June 15, 7-8:30 p.m., [Maple Valley Library](#), 21844 SE 248th Street, Maple Valley WA 98038
- June 16, 7-8:30 p.m., [Woodinville Library](#), 17105 Avondale Road N.E., Woodinville WA 98072
- July 14, 7-8:30 p.m., [Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center](#), 1711 Boalch Ave, North Bend, WA 98045
- July 20, 6:30-8:00 p.m., [Skykomish Town Hall](#), 119 4th Street N., Skykomish WA 98288

### **Help Protect Wilderness Areas and Lakes: Volunteer as a Weed Watcher**

We often hear about the importance of finding new weed infestations early and responding quickly to stop them while we still can. Well, now you can do just that. In our two weed watcher programs we are focusing on a short list of target weeds growing in certain areas. Then we will be taking the data and acting on it so you will have the satisfaction of making a real difference.

#### **Lake Weed Watcher Program:**

If you have a canoe or small boat and would like to help keep noxious weeds out of our small lakes, then consider joining our lake weed watcher program. Our goal is to catch water weeds *before* they have a chance to cause major problems. All it takes is attendance at one of two trainings in late June and two summertime lake surveys. We'll teach you how to identify the target weeds and their native look-alikes, and we'll provide all the equipment and materials you'll need (other than a boat). The half-day trainings will be in **Black Diamond on June 19** and in **Bellevue on June 26**. For more information or to sign up for training, contact Katie Messick at 206-263-6461 or [katie.messick@kingcounty.gov](mailto:katie.messick@kingcounty.gov).

#### **Trail Weed Watcher Program:**

If hiking on trails is more your passion, then consider joining our [Middle Fork South Fork Snoqualmie Weed Watcher group](#). The Mid Fork-South Fork Weed Watchers are part of an

ongoing cooperative effort with [Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust](#) and the King County Noxious Weed Program to find and remove invasive plants from the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Valley and the Cascade Gateway trails of the South Fork Snoqualmie basin, including state and federal forest lands and wilderness areas. We need people who can hike a trail or two this summer and take note of where they see invasive plants growing. It helps to have a GPS and some plant knowledge, but we will train you so don't worry about being an expert. If you can't make it to the training, let me know and I'll work out a way to get you up to speed and out on the trails.

**When:** Sunday, June 13, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Where:** North Bend Ranger Station (in the conference hall behind the main building)

**Logistics:** Starts in classroom, then in the field. Be ready for a short hike and bring lunch, water, GPS and compass if you have them, and something to write on.

**To Sign Up:** Email Sasha Shaw ([sasha.shaw@kingcounty.gov](mailto:sasha.shaw@kingcounty.gov)) or Mark Boyar ([mboyar@q.com](mailto:mboyar@q.com)).

### **Come Learn about Weeds while You Shop for Yummy Local Foods**

We will be setting up our noxious weed information booth at several Farmers Markets and two festivals over the next couple of months and would love to see you. We will have lots of handouts, live weed specimens of many local weed pests, and, of course, we will have our friendly weed experts there to answer your questions. Our schedule over the next couple of months is:

- June 5, [Vashon Farmer's Market](#)
- June 8, [Renton Farmers Market](#)
- June 17, [Bellevue Farmers Market](#)
- June 19, [Des Moines Farmers Market](#)
- June 19, [Fall City Days](#) (shared booth with PRKC, SiA)
- June 26, [Maple Valley Farmers Market Green Fair](#)
- July 8, [North Bend Farmers Market](#)
- July 10, [Federal Way Farmers Market](#)
- July 11, [Auburn International Farmers Market](#)
- July 13, [Carnation Farmers Market](#)
- July 17-18, [Vashon-Maury Island Strawberry Festival](#)
- July 28, [Sammamish Farmers Market](#)
- August 7, [Redmond Farmers Market](#)

### **Shiny Geranium Travels to Seattle in Native Plant Stock from Oregon**

We recently discovered that a Class A noxious weed called [shiny geranium](#) was growing in a native plant landscape in north Seattle. Not only was it present, but it was thriving and apparently overtaking the intended native species. Even worse, it was growing on a "living wall" made up of rocks and other materials contained in a mesh covering, making it very tricky to remove the roots without damaging the wall. Also, thanks to the abundant water and fertilizer being given to the planting area, the shiny geranium was amazingly big and healthy.

We were very alarmed and set about finding out how this came to happen. It turned out that the native plants installed in this landscape originated from the Willamette Valley in Oregon, the area where shiny geranium is the most widespread. Although we don't have a particular nursery identified, it is clear that this was a case of accidental contamination of nursery stock. Fortunately for us, the plant was identified by a botanist inspecting the planting area and gardeners have already pulled out the plants as best they can. Also, this seems to be the first year the plants flowered, so the seed bank should be contained in the original planting area.

This is a good thing, because the planting wall is on the bank of Ravenna Creek and seeds could have easily floated downstream.

If you are familiar with herb-Robert (“Stinky Bob”), then you know what its cousin [shiny geranium](#) is capable of. Both are rapid invaders into forests as well as other places weeds are more common, like back yards and roadsides. However, it seems that shiny geranium might be even better at being an invader, especially if it is given a little water. Where it has shown up in Oregon and Washington, shiny geranium spreads quickly and can form monotypic carpets in shady woodlands. Known mostly from the Willamette Valley and Rogue River areas of Oregon, our state so far has very little of this plant. Before this recent discovery, shiny geranium was only known to occur in Bayview State Park and Padilla Bay in Skagit County and in southwest Washington.

It is always a good idea to watch what grows where you install new plants in case you get a few unwanted hitchhikers. This experience with shiny geranium is a wake up call to be even more vigilant when installing plants, especially in an area where monitoring will be difficult or irregular, such as a native plant restoration area. No matter how hard nurseries try to keep their plants clean, weeds like shiny geranium are very good at escaping notice and spreading to new areas. For more information on shiny geranium check out our [website](#) or contact us at 206-296-0290 or [noxious.weeds@kingcounty.gov](mailto:noxious.weeds@kingcounty.gov). If you see shiny geranium or think you might know where it is growing, please contact us right away so we can stop it from spreading.

## **Washington State Weed Board to Consider Weed List Proposals including Adding English Holly and other Changes**

In their May meeting, the Washington State Weed Board received quite a few proposals for adding new species and changing levels of existing weeds on the state’s noxious weed list, including the proposal from the King County Weed Board to list [English Holly](#) as a Class C weed. All of the proposals they received are listed below.

This summer, the weed committee will review these proposals and gather information in order to make recommendations to the State Weed Board who will make the final decision about the weed list at their [November meeting](#), following a public hearing (initial recommendations will be made by the weed committee at the [July meeting](#)). The [noxious weed committee](#) is a panel of experts, weed board members and stakeholder representatives who meet throughout the year to review weed list proposals. Public comments can be made directly to the State Weed Board by mail or [email](#) anytime or in person at the public hearing in November (see the [State Weed Board website](#) for the listing process calendar).

The following proposals were received by the State Weed Board and will be reviewed this summer (the person or County Weed Board who made the proposal is noted after each one):

- **proposed Class A additions to the noxious weed list**
  - [Narrow-leaved cattail](#), *Typha angustifolia* (Jenifer Parsons, Ecology)
- **proposed Class C additions to the noxious weed list**
  - [Spotted jewelweed](#), *Impatiens capensis* (Jefferson Co.)
  - [Teasel](#), *Dipsacus fullonum* (Jefferson Co., Skagit Co.)
  - [Bittersweet nightshade](#), *Solanum dulcamara* (Jefferson Co., King Co.)
  - [Tall hawkweed](#), *Hieracium piloselloides* (King Co.)
  - [English holly](#), *Ilex aquifolium* (King Co.)
  - [Japanese eelgrass](#), *Zostera japonica* (Pacific Co.)

- **proposed weed class changes**
  - [Yellow archangel](#), *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, from a Class C to a Class B (Cowlitz Co.)
  - [Hairy willowherb](#), *Epilobium hirsutum*, from a Class C to a Class B (designated in Region 5) (King Co.)
- **proposed Class B designation changes**
  - [Hoary alyssum](#), *Berteroa incana* – to be designated south of Hwy 20 in Ferry County (Ferry County)
  - [Eurasian milfoil](#), *Myriophyllum spicatum* – to be designated by state in Pend Oreille, Stevens, Ferry, Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, and Lincoln counties. (e.g., high watermark of the Columbia River and its tributaries) (Chelan Co.)
  - [Houndstongue](#), *Cynoglossum officinale* – to be designated in Region 5
- **proposed deletions to the noxious weed list**
  - [Denseflower cordgrass](#), *Spartina densiflora* (currently Class A) (Steve and Cindy Bova)
- **proposed additions to the monitor list**
  - [Mole spurge](#), *Euphorbia lathyris* (Cowlitz Co.)
  - [Italian arum](#), *Arum italicum* (Clark Co. [verbal], Cowlitz Co.)
  - Periwinkle, [Vinca minor](#) and [V. major](#) (Cowlitz Co.)

For more information about these proposals or the weed listing process in Washington State, please contact Alison Halpern at the State Weed Board by email at [noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov](mailto:noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov) or by phone at 360-902-2053.

Please feel free to distribute this information freely and to contact me if you have any questions. If you do not wish to receive KC Weed News in the future, please drop me an email and I'll take you off the mailing list.

Thank you.