

## Primary Noxious Weeds



**Leafy spurge** - This is an aggressive weed that is poisonous to most livestock and may cause skin irritations for humans when exposed to the sap. Currently there are only a handful of sites identified in Clearwater County where leafy spurge has been found and is subsequently being controlled. Due to the detrimental effects of this weed and its currently small distribution, landowners are **highly** encouraged to take actions to control this noxious weed.

**Plumeless Thistle** - This weed prefers fertile soils but is capable of adapting to many conditions. Plumeless Thistle infestations suppress natural vegetation and may cause livestock to avoid grazing in infested areas thus reducing the productivity of pastures and hay lands.



**Spotted Knapweed** - This invasive weed was recently added to Clearwater County's noxious weed list. Spotted knapweed is common throughout Clearwater County and surrounding areas and the county is taking an active role against the further spread of the weed. It is frequently associated with poor or infertile soil conditions and also a common invader of disturbed sites which have these soils. It may be seen invading pastures, old hayfields, gravel pits and roadsides. Landowners are encouraged to take an active role against spotted knapweed should it be present on their property by contacting their local extension service/agent for methods best suited for control of the weed in their area.



**Bull Thistle** - This weed may be found in over grazed pastures or in areas that may be recently disturbed. The spiny nature of the weed makes it unpalatable to livestock and thus helps facilitate its spread.

**Canada Thistle** - This weed can spread rapidly once established and is difficult to remove. Its creeping root stock aids in the spread of the weed and creates dense stands that suppress native vegetation.



**Musk Thistle** - Due to its high seed production, once established this weed can spread very rapidly. As with the other thistle species, musk thistle tends to invade pastures and disturbed areas suppressing native vegetation.

**Purple Loosestrife** - This weed is adapted to wet soil conditions. It can invade all types of wetlands and can also infest agricultural ditches, roadsides and fields. One plant can produce as many as 2-3 million seeds per year, making it a rapidly spreading invasive. As with other weeds, it suppresses natural vegetation and can change the habitat of a wetland. Thus displacing a multitude of species that commonly occupy them. If a landowner identifies this weed they are encouraged to contact Environmental Services as biological controls are highly effective and may be available.



**Perennial Sow Thistle** - This weed is typically an invasive of many crops. However it can be found in pastures, along roadsides, cultivated fields, woodlands, gardens and other waste areas.

**Poison Ivy** - In Minnesota the most common variety tends to grow 1-3 inches tall. Poison Ivy releases a compound when damaged that can cause severe skin irritations. It is recommended that rubber gloves and protective clothing be used when controlling this plant. Do not burn any part of this plant as airborne particles will cause severe illness if inhaled.



### What can you do?

Each of these primary noxious weeds can be controlled using several different methods including chemical, mechanical and biological. Many of the weeds respond differently according to the type of control method being used. Therefore it is important to accurately identify the noxious weeds and contact your local extension agent for the most reliable method in your area.

Remember, one factor is the same for each of these weeds: Control at the right time. It is important to control weeds when they are most susceptible. For example, using chemicals when the weeds are in later stages of development is not as effective as if you spray a new seedling.



### Clearwater County Environmental Services

213 Main Ave North Dept 206  
Bagley, MN 56621

Phone: 218-694-6183  
Fax: 218-694-6244

E-mail: michael.stenseng@co.clearwater.mn.us

## Secondary Noxious weeds



**Common Tansy** - Be sure to wear gloves if handling this plant to avoid absorbing toxins through the skin. Since the toxic properties of this plant are cumulative, there is danger of illness, convulsions, and even death if exposed to large amounts of the plant's toxins.

Generally, most livestock will avoid Tansy but goats or sheep will readily graze on it.

**Wormwood** - Olive or silvery green leaves are a distinct characteristic of wormwood as well as its smell. When consumed by dairy cattle the strong flavor of this weed will taint the milk making it unusable for human consumption.



Wormwood also emits chemicals in the soil that inhibit the growth of other plants.



**Hoary Alyssum** - This weed is well adapted to gravelly or sandy soils and is a common invader of gravel pits, overgrazed pastures, abandoned fields and along road sides.

Horses that consume hay containing 30% or more of this weed may develop swelling in the lower legs, fever, depression and in some instances death may occur. Good pasture, crop, and hay management will minimize or prevent this weed from establishing.

**White Cockle** - Because the seed of this plant is difficult to separate from commercial seeds it can pose a serious problem in clover, alfalfa, and grass seed fields. It's recommended that "certified weed-free" seed is used when planting small grains or alfalfa.



**Wild Parsnip** - Avoid this plant or wear protective clothing when controlling it! The sap of this plant contains a compound that reacts with sunlight causing **photodermatitis** (severe blistering of the skin). Affected skin may remain darkened for years after blisters heal. In Minnesota, wild parsnip is typically found in wet meadow areas and in pastures or along roadsides.

**Grecian Foxglove** - This weed is sometimes confused with garden variety foxgloves that are typically sold by flower or nursery companies. Grecian foxglove produces a chemical which can affect the heart if absorbed through the skin and be potentially fatal to humans and to cattle or horses if ingested.



While control of secondary noxious weeds is not mandatory, controlling these weeds is recommended due to their detrimental effects if they become established.

## Other Sources for Information

Clearwater County Environmental Services  
[www.co.clearwater.mn.us](http://www.co.clearwater.mn.us)

University of Minnesota Extension  
[www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu)

Invasive Species  
[www.invasive.org](http://www.invasive.org)

Plants Database  
[www.plants.usda.gov](http://www.plants.usda.gov)

National Invasive Species Information Center  
[www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov)

National Invasive Species Council  
[www.invasivespecies.gov](http://www.invasivespecies.gov)

Weed Integrated Pest Management Program  
[www.mda.state.mn.us/weedcontrol](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/weedcontrol)

## Additional Photos



Leafy Spurge



Spotted Knapweed



Purple Loosestrife



Canada Thistle



Plumeless Thistle