

# IT'S FALL NOW...

## CAN I STILL TREAT MY NOXIOUS WEEDS?



Canada Thistle 'cotton'

**Yes!** Fall is an excellent time to control many biennial and perennial noxious weeds.



Rush Skeletonweed rosette

Spokane County Noxious Weed Control Board

(509)477-5777 · [www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard](http://www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard)

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## Is herbicide treatment in the fall effective?

**FALL** can be a very effective time to treat many biennial and perennial noxious weeds. In the fall, rains and cooler temperatures encourage **regrowth** and **germination** of new weed seedlings. These conditions can extend the herbicide application season. The best time to control broadleaf perennial plants is when they are actively growing in the spring, and in the fall when they are storing carbohydrates (sugars) in their roots to fuel growth in the next growing season.

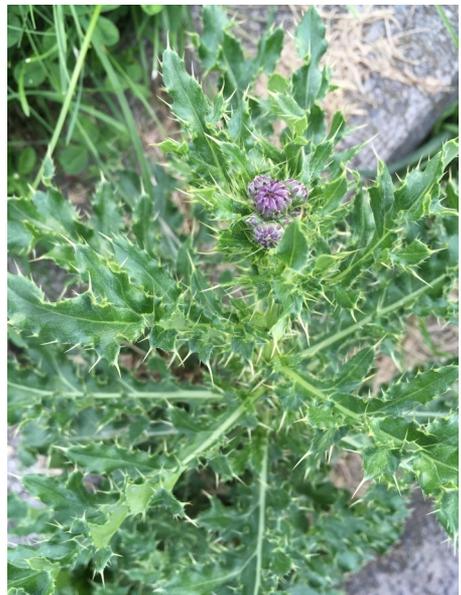
Always **READ THE LABEL** on the herbicide you choose to ensure proper application. Ineffective treatment will result in poor control, wasting your time and money.

Remember, **TIMING IS CRITICAL** to achieve good control. Check the weather for temperature, rainfall, and wind predictions. Ensure all actively growing plants are treated.

Improve control by adding a **SURFACTANT** to your herbicide mix. It lowers the surface tension of liquids, giving solutions better coverage and allowing them to penetrate plant structures better. They help reduce waste and increase the effectiveness of herbicides.



Regrowth on previously cut back spotted knapweed rosette.



If it's still green, it's still treatable. Canada thistle can grow into fall.

# Pick the right tool for your land–use plan

**HERBICIDE MIXES** may contain an array of systemic and residual herbicides. Brand names change over time; always read the label for chemical names, precautions, and directions for safe use.

**SYSTEMIC HERBICIDES** are transported throughout a plant's tissue, including down to its roots. When they are applied in the fall, the chemicals are transported to the roots along with the sugars the plant is storing, injuring the entire plant instead of just the above-ground plant structures. This is crucial for controlling difficult-to-kill spreading weeds like Canada thistle and Rush skeletonweed.



Canada thistle spreads rapidly by thick horizontal roots. Systemic herbicides are carried down to rooting structures, improving control.



**RESIDUAL HERBICIDES** control the whole plant including roots, and provide pre-emergence control of germinating weed seeds. Pre-emergent control allows grasses to get a jump start in the growing season, increasing cover and reducing resource availability for weeds. **DO NOT** use in areas where you intend to garden or restore desirable broadleaf plants in the near future, as residual soil control may inhibit broadleaf plant growth.

**CONTACT HERBICIDES** must be applied to growing plant leaves to be effective. They are not transported through the plant tissue to roots, and do not have any residual soil activity.

## KNAPWEEDS



Knapweed rosettes stick out in the fall, gray-green as everything else turns brown

Knapweeds are aggressive invaders and can be found in a broad range of habitats, including lawns. When cut, the rosette will continue to grow, and the plant may even bloom just a few inches off the ground.

Knapweeds exude chemicals from their roots that inhibit the growth of other vegetation. They can be biennial to perennial.

For fall rosette growth, consider treating with:

- 2,4-D
- Weedmaster
- Milestone

## RUSH SKELETONWEED



Dandelion-like rosettes of Rush skeletonweed regrow after being pulled.

Rush skeletonweed is most effectively treated in the rosette stage. As the plant grows stiff stick-like stems, the rosette dies back, and minimal leaf surface area is left on which herbicide will stick.

Skeletonweed that was pulled or cut may regrow rosettes in the fall, opening a window for effective treatment.

For fall rosette growth, consider treating with:

- 2,4-D
- Transline
- Milestone

## CANADA THISTLE

Long the bane of land managers and farmers, Canada thistle spreads aggressively by horizontal roots, and produces masses of seeds if given the opportunity. Canada thistle can be treated after it goes to seed, as long as it is still green and growing. If cut earlier in the season, Canada thistle may try to flower into the fall.

For fall growth:

- Roundup (spot spray when in flower/seed stage)
- Telar
- Milestone



Seeding Canada thistle is still treatable. Note the green foliage under the fluffy seeds.

## COMMON BUGLOSS

Common bugloss has a deep, thick taproot, and easily regrows after being cut multiple times. In the fall, energy is moving down to the taproot. The energy-rich taproot allows common bugloss to grow vigorously before desirable vegetation is able to grow to a competitive size.

**SURFACTANT** is necessary to get decent coverage due to the plant's dense, coarse hairs.

For fall rosette growth, consider treating with:

- Pasture Pro
- Telar
- Method+Telar



Common bugloss regrowth may rebloom as this rosette is preparing to do.

# PREVENT TUMBLEWEEDS

Kochia and Russian thistle are annuals that grow and mature later in the growing season than many biennial and perennial weeds. They may be missed in early season herbicide applications, allowing them to grow unchecked. Although they may already be going to seed in the fall, you can still help reduce their spreading.

Russian thistle is the iconic tumbleweed of the 'wild west'. As they die off, Kochia and Russian thistle can break from their main stem and tumble away in the wind. They are very effective at spreading seeds as they roll along.



Kochia can produce over 14,000 seeds/plant, and get over 5' tall.



Russian thistle forms spiny, neatly round plants, ideal for tumbling.

Tumbleweeds get caught up in fence lines, becoming fire hazards. They roll across open landscapes, spreading seed over large areas. Some end up in roads where they're caught by cars, which spread their seeds further. Removing the plant and disposing of it in the trash can reduce the spread of seeds, and the number of new plants that spring up on your property in years to come. Next year, look for seedlings where you removed parent plants, and remove them before they can bloom.

## HOW LATE IS TOO LATE?

Fall moisture typically leads to a flush of regrowth on cut perennials and may stimulate the germination of new seedlings. Fall herbicide applications can be made after a light frost, but not after a heavy freeze. A heavy freeze, or killing frost, knocks plants back and stalls their growth. When growth slows and the soil begins to freeze, herbicide application will be ineffective, and a waste of your time and money. Once hard freezes begin to hit, ensure your herbicide is safely stored at above freezing temperatures, put your feet up, and wait for spring.



Common mullein rosette growing vigorously in the fall.



Spotted knapweed decorated with frost. Photo courtesy of Emily Walston

# IF ITS GREEN AND GROWING, ITS TREATABLE



This lot full of weeds had plants in full bloom (i.e. very treatable) in mid-September. Hoary alyssum, white-flowering and abundant above, is an annual to weak perennial and is toxic to horses.



Ideal time to treat? Before the spotted knapweed forms a 3.5' x 5' thicket! This patch is still treatable, but requires more time, herbicide, and effort to ensure adequate coverage.

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