



## Summit County Cooperative Weed Management Area

### NOXIOUS WEED FACTSHEET

#### What is a noxious weed?

Any plant can be a weed if it grows where it is unwanted. A noxious weed, on the other hand, is a plant not native to the place it is growing and has been designated “noxious” by federal, state or county law due to its environmental, health or financial impacts. Noxious Weeds are "invasive", meaning they spread rapidly and out compete native plants. Many were brought to the United States unintentionally through agricultural and horticultural practices. Others were introduced intentionally for erosion control, grazing and gardening/landscaping and later escaped into natural landscapes.

#### Why are noxious weeds a problem?

Noxious weeds invade over 4,600 acres a day in the United States, can be difficult and costly to control and have several negative impacts, including:

- ◆ Loss of native plant species and decreased forest health
- ◆ Reduced food and shelter for wildlife
- ◆ Injury to people, wildlife, livestock and pets
- ◆ Increased water use
- ◆ Increased erosion
- ◆ Clogging of rivers and streams and sometimes increased severity of flooding
- ◆ Increased severity, size and frequency of fires
- ◆ Reduce property value by 7-90%

#### Why you need to control noxious weeds on your property:

**It is the law.** The 1971 Utah Noxious Weed Act calls for the control of noxious weeds on public and private lands. State and federal weed laws give the authority to local government to inform private land owners when their lands contain noxious weeds. The laws also task the local governments with citing land owners for weeds they fail to control after notification and charging landowners for the cost of controlling the noxious weeds.

**Garlic Mustard:**

Garlic mustard is a Eurasian and African biennial that reproduces by seed. In the first year, it forms rosettes and a flowering stalk the second year. Leaves of rosettes are kidney/heart-shaped with toothed edges. Leaves on mature plants are more triangular. Garlic mustard has small, white 4-petaled flowers in clusters at the top of the stem. Plants usually smell like garlic when crushed, especially younger leaves.



Garlic mustard is difficult to control once established. Hand-pulling individual plants at the rosette stage is effective if the entire root is removed. Once the plant flowers, it is less important to get the root. Bag and throw all pulled plants in the trash. Garlic mustard produces a chemical that prevents native plant germinating even after mustard death. For larger populations, herbicide is often necessary. Herbicide should be



**Spotted Knapweed:**

Spotted knapweed stems and leaves are somewhat hairy making the plant look grey/bluish green. Basal leaves are very divided/lobed. Like garlic mustard, spotted knapweed forms a rosette the first year and a flowering stem the second year. Flowers are pink-purple and sometimes white. A distinctive characteristic of spotted knapweed is the dark (brown to black) spots on the bracts of the flower head.



Hand weeding can be effective for small populations if repeated frequently each season. Repeated mowing with no other method of control can shift this species from a biennial to a perennial, so use mowing sparingly. Herbicide is effective, especially in combination with mowing. Biological control agents such as: flies or weevils, can be



Controlling noxious weeds on your property is not only your legal responsibility, but is a good neighbor policy. Weeds do not recognize land ownership boundaries, control of weeds on your land prevents them from becoming your neighbor's problem too.

