

The Spinneret

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Summer 2014



Summer has returned and with it comes an opportunity to write on a subject I have neglected for some time. Apparently we do weed control but I have never written on the subject. So, this newsletter will be the first one dedicated to weeds. Future editions of the Spinneret will incorporate weed and vegetation articles sprinkled in with the bugs and animals. - Ed.

(Ob)Noxious Weeds:

The other day Ashley, our receptionist, handed me a note from a client asking if I could do an article about "gorst". Confused I asked, "Why would I write about Gorst? I've driven through the town many times on my way to Bremerton but I don't think I can offer any insight into the community." Then she handed me a bag filled with plant samples and I realized that the note meant "gorse", an invasive plant.

The folks in Gorst will be pleased to be off the hook.

Gorse is an evergreen shrub related to peas.

The bright yellow flowers have the shape typical of peas with a bonnet covering the pollen producing organs. At a distance it can be confused with Scotch broom (another invasive evergreen weed) but the sharp spiny leaves are a dead give away.



Gorse, *Ulex europaeus*

It can grow over 10 feet tall and form stands 30 feet in diameter.

It is native to Europe where it has been used for hedgerows, ground into fodder for cattle, and distilled into homeopathic medicine for treating "hopelessness and despair". Gorse was imported to the U.S. for use as a garden shrub because it is drought resistant and deer resistant.

Like many hearty plants that require little maintenance this one has leapt the garden wall and become invasive and destructive.

Gorse is a pioneer plant that readily invades disturbed soil and soil that is low in nutrients. Once established, it produces copious amounts of seeds which can remain viable for over 30 years. This allows it to spread quickly and makes it difficult to eradicate.

This plant produces large amounts of flammable oil and woody debris that make it a fire hazard where large numbers of plants are established.

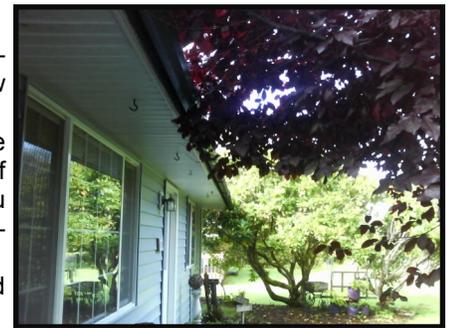
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The Honey Do List:

Limbs and foliage touching the building can allow ants to enter.

To keep raccoons off the roof you need 3 feet of clearance, to stop rats you need 5, and to stop squirrels you will need 10.

So grab those shears and get whackin'. ■



What's Weather got to do with it?

You sprayed my weeds and they didn't die!

This is a fairly common complaint of spring and early summer as we head outdoors to maintain our homes. So, even after having your weeds sprayed, how come they are still there? Worse yet, they're still green!

Often it's what I refer to as the "refrigerator" effect. When you cut a head of lettuce and stuff it in the fridge, it's dead, it just doesn't know it yet.

The same thing happens with weeds. Within two hours of being sprayed most of the herbicide is inside the plant ready to go to work but, as long as it's cold the plant can't digest it. So it just stands there all green and healthy looking until it warms up.

As soon as the sun hits it or temperatures get above 55 degrees the plant will begin metabolizing and shortly after wilting will occur.

You may want it to hurry up and DIE! But you can only kill it once. More spraying won't make it any deader any sooner.

You sprayed my weeds and they died but now they are coming back!

This usually happens mid to late summer when an application

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It is particularly troubling in logging areas where it can shade out young seedlings and native vegetation. It also takes over pasture land making it unfit for grazing. The spines that make up most of the foliage on the plant make it unpalatable to most animals.



Apparently, goats are effective at reducing mature plants and chickens will consume the seeds which do not survive the digestive process.

Surprisingly, even though it is recognized as a plant pest, gorse is still sold by many nurseries in the U.S. (it is illegal to do so in Washington)

In Washington we have an agency called the **Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board**. This agency is tasked with the responsibility for identifying, tracking, and eradicating non-native plants that cause economic or habitat damage.

These functions are often delegated to county or regional boards that are tasked with the actual administration and enforcement of weed control laws.

In Grays Harbor, gorse is classified as a "Class B" noxious weed.

Class B weeds are those that are widespread in some parts of the state, but rare or absent in other parts of the state. The goal with Class B weeds is to prevent them from spreading into new areas, and to contain or reduce their population in already infested areas.

Land owners are responsible for controlling noxious weeds on their property. If a land owner fails or refuses to control the weeds, the control board has the authority to do so and bill the landowner or lien the property.

Additional information about gorse and noxious weeds can be found at: <http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/> ■

Service Targets:

Current applications are focused on spiders, ants, sow bugs, earwigs and millipedes.

We are using a combination of liquid products this time of year. In areas where carpenter ants are active Termidore (fipronil) is being applied to foundations. This product is highly effective against ants but has low impact on mammals.

For spiders and other crawling insects Suspend (deltamethrin) is being applied to siding and eaves.

We do guaranty the performance of our services.

If you have problems or questions regarding your service please call promptly. ■

is followed by a prolonged dry spell.

Products that prevent plant growth have to work on the roots. When applications are made the products sit on the surface of the soil where there are no roots. In order to get into the soil with the roots they need water to wash them into the soil. Often half of an inch of water or more. In the spring we can usually count on nature to deliver it. By mid summer it might be necessary to get out the hose.

I put down my own granules to prevent weeds but they keep coming back!

Granular products like Casoron® and Preen® are highly effective at preventing a broad range of weeds. But, even though they come as a bag of granules, the active ingredients work as a gas. So, they tend to be more effective at preventing growth in cooler months. In direct sunlight they may evaporate in just a few days. These and similar products can be reapplied but, you need to read the label carefully and not exceed the maximum amount of product per year.

When it comes to weeds and weather, timing is everything.■

Weird Plant Facts:

- The worlds smallest flowering plant, Wolffia Anguste, is about the size of a candy, cake sprinkle or roughly three times the size of the period at the end of this sentence.
- The worlds largest living organism is a fungus that lives in the soils of the Olympic peninsula.
- Strawberries are the only plant that grows its seeds on the outside of the fruit.
- According to Wikipedia: In 1973, the world's most isolated tree, Arbre du Ténéré, was hit and destroyed by a drunk driver, despite being 250 miles from any other living tree.

Keep In Touch:



HEY! Have you used your online account yet?

Your email address is all you need to access your account online.

Once you sign up you can see your service history, and inspection documents.

You can also correspond with us by email or manage your account. You can even make payments by credit card.

We don't use your email to send junk mail and you can be sure your information is secure, confidential and will not be given to 3rd parties. ■