

Some questions and answers about the county noxious weed list

1. Do we need to hold a public hearing prior to adopting our county noxious weed list? **Yes**, you do. You need to schedule a public hearing in compliance with the open public meetings act (OPMA), which often takes place the same time as a county weed board meeting. The hearing provides an opportunity for county residents to provide comments about any Class B non-designates and Class C noxious weeds your board intends to select for required control. Please note that Class A and Class B designates must be added to your county weed list (RCW 17.10.090). After holding the hearing and considering any comments that were received, your county weed board votes to adopt the new noxious weed list.

2. When do we adopt the annual county noxious weed list? **County weed boards have 90 days after the State Weed Board has adopted its list** to create their own lists. While it might seem logical that the adoption date is the day that the Board votes on changes to the noxious weed list, it's actually the day that the Board submits its final rule-making paperwork (CR-103), which was on December 1st. Based on that date, county weed boards have through **Friday, March 27th, 2026** to adopt their weed lists.

3. If there are Class A noxious weeds or Class B designates that have not been found in our county, do we still need to add them to our county weed list? **Yes, you do.** RCW 17.10.090 still requires you to add them, even if they do not occur in your county. That way, if they are discovered at some point, you are all set for some major ED/RR action.

4. By adding all those Class A noxious weeds and B designates, our county weed list looks huge. Is there a way to make it easier to read? Of course. **You have a few options.**

1. You can indicate on your printed county weed list which noxious weeds are known to exist in your county. For example, you could highlight them on your printed weed list by using bold font, underlining them, or placing an asterisk in front of them. Just remember to explain what that formatting indicates somewhere on your list.

2. Or, you could adopt all the required species and then print an abridged weed list, as long as you have the full list available, such as another printed version, or on your website. If you do this, make sure it is clearly stated on your printed abridged list that there are other species on the list and where to get the full list.

5. We want our county residents to be aware of all noxious weeds growing in our county, including many Class B non-designates and Class C noxious weeds, but we don't want to require control of them all. Is it OK to include them all on the list? **Yes and no.** Class C and Class B non-designates are selected, as described in RCW 17.10.090, when your county weed board finds their control necessary. So, if you add all the state noxious weeds to your county weed list, you are essentially requiring control of all them. However, if there are noxious weeds that you would like to educate about and encourage landowners to voluntarily control, you might consider adding a section to your printed weed list for weeds of local concern. You could call it "weeds of local concern", or "weeds we encourage the control of", or something like that, so that landowners understand their control is not mandatory.

6. We require the control of a Class B noxious weed because it is a high priority in our county, although it was not designated by the state here. Does that make it a Class A noxious weed? **Nope. It is still a Class B noxious weed** – hopefully one your county weed board added to your county list as a "Class B select".

Control requirements, namely the prevention of seed production and dispersal of all propagating parts, are the same for B-designates and B-selects. Eradication is required of Class A noxious weeds.

7. We added some Class C noxious weeds to our county list for required control. Does that make them Class B noxious weeds? **No, they are still Class C noxious weeds** and need to be listed as such. While there is no official term for Class C noxious weeds that have been selected by a county weed board for control, we often refer to them as "Class C selects". Landowners are required to control and prevent the spread of Class C noxious weeds that have been selected by the county weed board (RCW 17.10.140(1c)).

8. What is the difference between eradication and control?

1. "**Eradicate**" means to eliminate a noxious weed within an area of infestation. (WAC 16-750003(2c))

2. "**Control**" of noxious weeds means to prevent all seed production and to prevent the dispersal of all propagative parts capable of forming new plants. (WAC 16-750.003(2a))

3. Basically, eradicate means to destroy all the plants in an infestation: leaves, roots, shoots, flowers - the whole shebang. Gone. Kaput. Control means that the noxious weeds in an infestation have been treated such that the plants are unable to produce any seeds and are unable to disperse any other propagating parts (turions, rhizome or stem fragments that could resprout, bulbs, bulbets, bulbils, etc.).

4. Technically, a plant does not need to be destroyed to consider it controlled. It could be mowed at the right time to prevent seed production or have its flowerheads clipped and disposed of prior to seed maturation. But often times control measures such as herbicide application or physically removing a plant (digging up/hand-pulling) are more effective in the long-run because those plant does not come back the next year. The landowner should be advised that new plants might still arise due to existing seeds in the soil.

9. Does a Class A noxious weed need to be eradicated within a year in my county? No, not necessarily. The Class A infestation(s) itself does not necessarily need to be eradicated, but the **plants themselves do**. Sometimes complete eradication of a Class A noxious weed within a year is not possible, even when all of the known plants are destroyed because:

1. There may be a seed bank, resulting in future plants in subsequent years. This is especially true for newly detected populations that may be been established for a while.

2. There may be continual introductions of a Class A noxious weed, either through seed contamination or illegal acquisition of quarantined species (i.e., those shady parking lot garden plant/seed swaps).

So, you can successfully eradicate Class A noxious weed plants from your county every year, but the ultimate goal of extirpating the species from a county may take longer.

10. Do landowners also have to prevent the spread of Class B and Class C noxious weeds when control is required? Why yes, **yes they do**. RCW 17.10.140 requires that a landowner must control and prevent the spread of Class B designates and Class B and C selects within and from the property. Control and prevent

the spread go hand in hand, like bread and butter, and peanut butter and jelly. Prevent the spread means you are confining a noxious weed and all its propagating parts to an area of infestation.

11. My county weed board is very concerned about a plant that is not on the state noxious weed list. Can we add it to our county weed list? **No, technically you may not.** A county weed list can only have species that are already on the state noxious weed list. However, thanks to RCW 17.10.090(3), a county weed board or any other branch of city or county government can conduct education, outreach, or other assistance for a plant species that is of local concern. Isn't that nice? The only thing you cannot do is require control, though you can encourage the voluntary control of that plant. If you have unlisted species, you might consider adding them to a "weeds of local concern" section on your printed weed list.