

The State Noxious Weed List
(Chapter 16-750 WAC)
How You Can Participate

The State Noxious Weed List is a prioritized listing of Washington's noxious weeds. The list is divided into three classes, each with different requirements for control.

Class A noxious weeds are the highest priority species on the state list. These noxious weeds are new invaders that are present in only very limited amounts in Washington. Control is required for all Class A species.

Class B noxious weed are the second highest priority. These noxious weeds infest some regions of the state but not others. The regions that do not yet have well established infestations of Class B noxious weeds are designated for mandatory control. In the regions where Class B noxious weeds have become established, control is a local option.

Class C noxious weed are established throughout much of the state. Control of these noxious weeds is a local option.

The list is updated on an annual basis by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (Board). The process of considering changes to the list is led by the Board's Noxious Weed Committee. This scientific committee is composed of Board representatives, scientific advisors to the Board, selected county coordinators, and representatives from the Native Plant Society and the horticultural industries. There are many opportunities for the county noxious weed control boards and other interested groups or citizens to participate in the weed listing process. The committee has revised the timeline for the weed listing process, in order to increase opportunities for public participation. The following annual steps compose the weed listing process:

CALL FOR SUGGESTIONS Early in the year, the Board will send out a general call for suggested additions, changes, or deletions to the list. This mailing will be sent to all counties, to interest groups, and to members of the general public who have previously expressed an interest in the listing process. This suggestion period will be open until the end of April (see below for information on developing a successful suggestion).

INITIAL REVIEW The Noxious Weed Committee will hold their first meeting in April or May to consider possible changes to the list. This committee meeting is open to the public and participation is welcome. All suggestions will be reviewed and discussed, and presentations may be made by their proponents. If a proponent of specific changes does not present enough information, the committee may request additional details from them. Many requests require some degree of research or field verification by committee members.

RESEARCH, FIELD INVESTIGATIONS, AND INITIAL REVIEW OF CHANGES During the summer, the committee will conduct any needed research on suggested changes to the weed list. This research may include literature searches, surveys of county programs, discussions with other states, and/or field investigations. The committee will develop an initial recommendation for public comment.

FINAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION The committee will meet again in September to review the results of the research and field investigations and the public comments on the initial recommendations. Proponents are welcome to present additional information to the committee on their suggested changes. This committee meeting is also open to the public and participation is welcome. The committee will vote on their final recommended changes, if any, and prepare a report for the Board. The report will list the recommended changes and all other suggestions, along with a brief summary of the reasons for decision. The committee considers all available information on the biology, behavior, distribution, and control of each suggested species when making a decision to recommend listing as a noxious weed. Additional information may result in a latter decision to remove a species from the list. The committee will work with Board staff to develop informational handouts on any new species being considered for listing. At this point the full Board steps back into the process and they initiate the last two steps:

PUBLIC HEARING The Board will consider the recommendations from the committee during their September Board meeting and decide on a final proposal. The Board will issue an informational press release on the proposed changes to the general media and to counties, interest groups, and other interested parties. The proposal is published in the State Register. A public hearing will be scheduled, usually in November, to solicit public comment on the proposed changes to the list.

FINAL BOARD CONSIDERATION AND DECISION The Board will consider the public testimony received and make a final decision on changes to the weed list. The new weed list typically becomes effective in January and the Board actively distributes the new list to interested parties and the general public.

The key to a prioritized and prevention-oriented noxious weed list is accuracy. If the list does not accurately represent what is on the ground, then we will not be directing our resources in the most effective way. The State Noxious Weed Control Board cannot maintain the weed list on its own – your assistance is essential. We need everyone’s eyes and ears to help us keep ahead of the game. You can participate by recommending changes to the list when you hear about or see new species threatening the state, when your knowledge of infestation patterns suggests that a species may not be listed in the correct class, when infestation levels have changed and a Class B designation changes is needed, or when you feel that a species is no longer appropriate for the list. A successful request includes the following information:

- Scientific and common name of the species in question;
- Background on the biology and properties of the species;
- Location and infestation information – where, when, and how much;
- Control history, if available;
- Evidence of behavior in other locations;
- Specific change requested; and
- Reasons for the request.

Not all of this information will be available for all requests, but each item will help the committee to evaluate the request. Please feel free to contact the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (360-902-2053) for samples of past recommendations. Your county noxious weed control board and WSU cooperative extension agent are also good sources of information. Thank you for your interest in protecting Washington’s resources from the devastating impact of noxious weeds!