



# TAKE ALONG NOXIOUS WEED FIELD GUIDE

## GORSE

- Evergreen shrub over 10 feet tall.
- Older plants develop a dense center of dead, dry material.
- Extremely thorny, spines form on branches as leaves.
- Flowers are similar to Scotch Broom, but bloom much earlier.



## GIANT HOGWEED

- Deeply cut leaves, up to 5 feet across. Bolting stalks can grow 15-20 feet tall.
- Often has reddish purple spots and bristles on stalks and stems.
- Flowers in a large flat-topped umbel, up to 2 ½ feet across June-July.
- The plant exudes a clear watery sap which sensitizes the skin to ultraviolet radiation. This can result in severe burns to the affected areas when exposed to sunlight.
- Often confused with Cow Parsnip



## MOUSE-EAR HAWKWEED

- Creeping perennial, spreads by seed or stolons.
- Leaves grow 2-3 inches long and less than 1 inch wide, have bristly hairs on both sides.
- Stolons are 3-12 inches long.
- Flowers are lemon yellow on leafless erect stems, 3-10 inches tall, blooms May through June.



## YELLOWDEVIL HAWKWEED

- Perennial with dense cluster of basal leaves.
- Top of leaf is smooth with a whitish coating, underside has scattered, bristly hairs, particularly along the midrib. Leaves are 1 ½ to 5 inches long. Numerous slender, leafy stolons.
- Stem is 8-32 inches tall.
- Flower stem and stolons both have black, bristly hairs.
- Flowers are yellow with 3-50 flower heads in a flat-topped cluster, similar to mouse-ear hawkweed, but smaller and many per stalk.
- Blooms in early summer.



## ORANGE HAWKWEED

- Perennial with hairy, matted leaves, numerous stolons and rhizomes.
- Growth habits similar to mouse-ear hawkweed, but leaves are wider and darker green.
- Forms large, matted colonies.
- Flowers are orange, red on the margin, about 1" in diameter on stalks from 2-24" tall.
- Blooms from June to September.



### **SLENDERFLOWER THISTLE**

- Winter annual growing up to 5 feet tall.
- Triangular shaped stem wings and are tipped with a spine.
- Leaves are long and slender, pointed at the end with six to eight pairs of spine-tipped lobes. Underside of leaves and stems covered with cobwebby hairs.
- Pink flowers are round, with clusters of five to fifteen. Blooms from late may to early July.



### **BUTTERFLY BUSH**

- Deciduous shrub. Arching branches, can reach 15 ft. tall.
- Leaves are lance shaped and oppositely arranged, upper leaf surfaces are deep green or blue-gray, undersides have a dense covering of short fuzzy hair.
- Flowers are very showy, colors range from purple, pink, magenta, white and red.
- Blooms between mid-summer and first frost.
- All cultivars of *Buddleja Davidii* are noxious.



### **LEAFY SPURGE**

- Grows 1 ½ to 3 feet tall, single, erect stem that may branch near the top.
- Alternate, crowded leaves are about 3" long, and only ¼" wide. Leaves are yellow-green, turn red with first frost.
- Showy yellow bracts give plant a yellowish appearance.
- Blossoms May-June, very small barely noticeable green flowers (no petals).
- Leaves, stems and roots all exude a milky, irritating sap when broken.



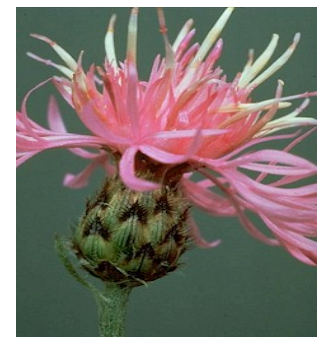
### **MEADOW KNAPWEED**

- Perennial with a woody root crown, grows 20 to 40 inches high.
- Leaves are slightly lobed, up to 6" long, 1 ¼" wide, grayish-green.
- Buds are very round. Flowers are up to 1 ½" across, rose to purple, rarely white. Bracts are fringed.
- Blooms May through August.
- Meadow knapweed is a hybrid between Black and Brown knapweeds and so is highly variable in appearance and is extremely adaptable.
- Growth pattern is similar to matting, excluding all other plants.



### **SPOTTED KNAPWEED**

- Perennial with a stout tap root, grows up to 4 feet tall.
- Stems and leaves are light blue-gray.
- Leaves are lobed, and get smaller as they progress up the stem.
- Buds are ½" long. Flowers are pink to purple, rarely white, ¾ to 1" across.
- Flower bracts have distinctive black spots.
- Blooms from June to October.



### **DIFFUSE KNAPWEED**

- Biennial to short lived perennial. Height varies from 8-40 inches tall.
- Leaves and stems are blue-gray, leaves are deeply lobed.
- Plants are rounded and break off in the wind when dry like tumbleweeds.
- Flowers are usually less than 1" across.
- Usually white, they are sometimes pink or lavender. Those color variations are rare in Thurston County.
- Bracts are straw-colored, fringed, with a spiny tip, about ¼" long.



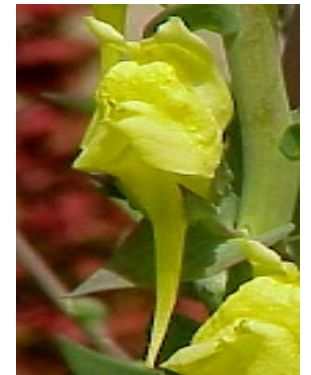
### **COMMON FENNEL**

- Very large perennial herb that can grow from 4 to 12 feet tall.
- It has feathery dark green to bronzy leaves and flat topped umbrella shaped clusters of yellow flowers.
- The huge tap root can grow to 10 feet long.
- Blooms from July to September, producing large numbers of seeds.
- The seed, foliage, stems and roots all have a strong licorice scent.



### **DALMATIAN TOADFLAX**

- Grows 2-4 feet tall, spreads by seed and creeping rootstocks.
- Stems and leaves are a powdery bluish-green. Leaves are egg-shaped, pointed, and clasp the stem.
- Flowers resemble snapdragons, yellow with orange bearded throat.
- Blooms May through August.
- May be a contaminant in wild flower seed mixes.
- Can be confused with Yellow Toadflax, which blooms a little later, and has long, narrow leaves on short stalks.



### **ANNUAL BUGLOSS**

- Annual plant, grows 6-24 inches in height.
- It is a leafy herb with erect stems and alternate leaves.
- The slender lance-shaped leaves are bristly hairy and crinkled on the margins.
- Blue funnel-formed flowers are borne in spiral clusters at the tip of the plant.
- Leaves are very warty on this bugloss.



### **BLUEWEED**

- A biennial plant spreads only by seed. Plants are erect, growing two to three feet tall.
- Stems and leaves are covered with prickly hairs. Stems and leaves are sometimes spotted with red. Leaves are 4-5" long. Leaves at base of plant are stalked; leaves up the stem growing progressively smaller.
- Flowers are bright, cobalt blue, arranged on the upper side of short stems that elongate after flowering.
- Blooms from June through August.



### **RUSH SKELETONWEED**

- Perennial, one to four feet tall. Overwinters as a rosette of hairless basal leaves, 2-5 inches long, and ½ to 2 inches wide.
- Leaves are lobed, pointing back toward the base.
- Mature plant is dark green (but it really looks gray), nearly leafless. Basal leaves absent at this stage. Hairs near base of stem point downward.
- Flowers grow along stem at leaf joints and at tip of branches, about ½" wide, found singly or in clusters of two to five.
- Blooms in late summer.



### **YELLOW NUTSEDGE**

- Grass like perennial with glossy, triangular stems.
- Bright green leaves, 6-30 inches tall. Leaves are arranged in three vertical rows.
- Seed heads are straw colored to golden brown and bloom in fall, although blooming is rare in Western Washington.
- Nutlets (tubers) are attached to rhizomes and look like tiny potatoes, each Nutlet has 4-6 buds that can sprout.
- Classified as the fifth worst weed in the world.
- Sources of contamination originate from contaminated soil, soil amendments, and nursery stock.



### **POISON HEMLOCK**

- Tall biennial, second year bolting plants grow up to 12 feet in height.
- Very distinctive reddish-purple blotches on stems, leaves are finely divided.
- Has a most disagreeable odor when crushed or bruised.
- White flowers are in slightly rounded clusters at the ends of branches.
- All parts of plant are poisonous. "Poison hemlock remains toxic for several years after being pulled, and it is wise not to leave the dead plants where they might be eaten by wildlife or children" (Parsons 1973).



### **TANSY RAGWORT**

- Usually biennial, sometimes winter annual, sometimes perennial.
- Rosettes have dark green leaves, underside whitish, slightly hairy.
- Leaves are deeply lobed, have a somewhat ruffled appearance.
- Plants grow from 1-4 feet tall at blooming.
- Flowers are born in flat-topped clusters; each flower has (usually) 13 petals.
- Blooms July through September.
- Tansy is toxic.



### **GARDEN LOOSESTRIFE**

- An erect rhizomatous perennial that may attain a height of one meter or more.
- Both the stems and the leaves are softly hairy.
- Lance-shaped leaves, 8-12 cm long, occur on the stem in an opposite or whorled arrangement.
- The leaves are dotted with black or orange glands.
- The yellow, primrose-like flowers occur in a cluster at the top of the plant. Each flower has five petals and a calyx with reddish-brown margins.
- The fruit is a dry capsule.
- Much like purple loosestrife, garden loosestrife invades wetlands.



### PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

- "Emergent aquatic" perennial, grows up to 9 feet tall.
- Stems are square. Leaves are 1 ½ to 4 inches long, willow-like.
- Flowers have 5-6 petals, magenta to purple, sometimes pink, rarely white. Flower spikes are columnar, not conical like spirea. Blooms from July to October.
- Grows near any fresh water, wet pastures, meadows and ditches. Tops of young vegetative plants resemble basil.
- Easily confused from a distance with spirea and fireweed.



### WILD CHERVIL

- Biennial, but often becomes perennial in the NW. Plants grow from 4-6 feet from thick tap roots that can grow to 5 feet deep.
- Hollow, furrowed stems with lower stem hairy.
- Fernlike foliage is not aromatic, which is different from most plants in the carrot family.
- Tiny white flowers are born in umbrella shaped clusters at the ends of wiry branched stems.
- Second year plants bloom April through July.



### YELLOW STAR THISTLE

- Winter annual, member of the Centaurea (knapweed) family. Forms a rosette in earliest spring, grows up to 30" high (in Eastern Washington) and much taller in Thurston County.
- Stems and leaves are a dull green color, covered with fine woolly hairs.
- Basal leaves are lobed, becoming shorter and narrower with pointed tips further up the stems.
- Flowers are yellow, thistle-like with long, sharp, straw-colored spines 3/8" to 3/4" long.
- Blooms from July to August.
- Horses may be poisoned and develop "chewing disease", which causes an inability to eat or drink and the horses may die from dehydration and starvation. There is no cure and only horses are affected.



### MILK THISTLE

- Winter annual or biennial, main stem is stout, ridged and branching, 2-6 feet tall.
- Broad leaves are deeply lobed and basal leaves can be up to 20 inches long. Leaves are alternate, clasping to the stem. Most distinguishing characteristic is the white patches, or marbling found along the veins of the leaves.
- Flowers are solitary at branch tips, pinkish purple, with broad, leathery bracts covered with stiff spines 3/4" to 2" long.
- Ingestion of milk thistle by grazing animals causes nitrate poisoning, which can be lethal to cattle and sheep.



### SPANISH BROOM

- Woody perennial shrub, 6-10 feet tall.
- Rounded bright green stems are mostly leafless.
- Leaves are simple, one parted, compared to Scotch Broom (3-parted).
- Flowers are fragrant, and bright yellow.
- Blooms from July to frost.
- All parts of the plant is poisonous if eaten.



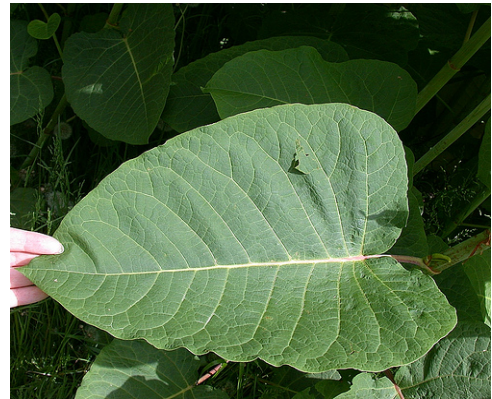
### **JAPANESE KNOTWEED**

- Perennial species with numerous, reddish-brown freely branched hollow stems.
- The plant can reach 4 to 8 feet in height and is often shrubby.
- Japanese knotweed is significantly shorter than Giant or Bohemian knotweed.
- The leaves are 4 to 6 inches long and generally triangular with an abrupt point and a blunt leaf base.
- The whitish flower clusters are longer than the leaves and are borne in open, drooping panicles.
- Dead stalks are fairly persistent through the winter.



### **GIANT KNOTWEED**

- Perennial with large, heart shaped leaves, often more than a foot long and 2/3 as wide.
- Hollow, jointed stems are swollen at the nodes giving a bamboo-like appearance.
- Can grow to more than 16 feet in height!
- The flower clusters of giant Knotweed are sparse, relatively small compared to those of Japanese knotweed and have a greenish tint.
- Giant knotweed stems die back with the first frost.



### **BOHEMIAN KNOTWEED**

- Hybrid of Japanese and Giant Knotweeds.
- Generally taller than Japanese Knotweed, with larger leaves..
- Stems are hollow and erect, minimally branched, and usually reddish-brown at maturity.
- Leaves are more oval rather than Japanese knotweed, and not nearly as large as Giant knotweed..
- The leaf tip is tapered to blunt, and the base is slightly indented to deeply heart-shaped.
- White flower clusters are about the same length as the leaves.



### **HIMALAYAN KNOTWEED**

- Not usually confused with other knotweeds, it is recognized by its long slender leaves.
- Leaves are leathery, 5 to 12 inches in length with sharply pointed tips and slightly heart shaped to tapered bases.
- Grows to about 6 feet in height.
- Main stems are erect with twigs zigzagging slightly from node to node.
- Showy white to pinkish fragrant flower clusters are borne at the tips of branches.

