

BOGUS BASIN INVASIVE PLANT FIELD GUIDE



WHAT ARE INVASIVE PLANTS?

Invasive plants are non-native plants that were introduced and cause significant harm to an ecosystem. Some plants were brought to the U.S. as ornamental plants without knowing their impacts, and others unknowingly hitched a ride from their native ranges.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Healthy ecosystems have a diverse assortment of native plant species. Each species has evolved with each other over thousands of years along with the wildlife around them, developing their own niche in the ecosystem. The diversity of a native plant ecosystem helps to create more resiliency against fire and drought, something that is especially important in the age of climate change. When invasive plants are introduced, they are able to out compete native vegetation since they have no natural competitors, turning an area that was once quite diverse into a mono-culture of one plant. This can lead to degraded wildlife habitat, more erosion, poor water quality, and decreased recreation opportunities.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

While out recreating, the best way you can help is to reduce the spread of these invasive plants. Here's a few examples:

- Wash your bike before and after riding to reduce the chances of transporting seeds to new areas
- Check your boots, socks, and dogs for any seeds that have hitched a ride
- Stay only on established roads and trails and away from weed infested areas
- Educate your friends!

WHAT IS BOGUS BASIN DOING TO HELP?

As stewards of our natural world, Bogus Basin is committed to ensuring our recreation area is as healthy as possible and are taking a proactive approach to invasive weed management. Here's some of the things we are doing:

- A bike wash station was installed in front of the rental shop near Simplot lodge for bikers to wash their bikes
- We developed a weed abatement plan with the Boise National Forest to reduce the spread of invasive plants in disturbed areas
- Our stewardship team uses several evidence based methods to control and remove invasive plants from around the mountain
- Planting native plants in recently disturbed areas to reduce the ability of invasive plants to take root
- Experimenting with new and innovative methods of habitat restoration
- Educating our community on how we can all take care of the places we love





SPOTTED KNAPWEED

Plants grow 6 to 24 inches (15 to 60 cm) in height and seeds spread readily in the wind. It is native to eastern Europe and Asia. Very common in disturbed soils. Plant is carcinogenic so gloves should be worn if pulling.

Flowers

Flowering occurs from June to October. The 0.2 to 0.4 inches (5-10 mm) long flower heads occur singly or in clusters at the branch tips. Each head bears stiff bracts (artichoke like scales on the side of the head), which are black tipped giving the plant its 'spotted' appearance. Heads contain from 30 to 50 thin pink or purple colored flowers.



Leaves

The basal leaves are up to 8 inches (20 cm) long, deeply lobed, and arranged in a rosette. Stem leaves are arranged alternately, are smaller, and not lobed. Uppermost leaves are bract-like.



Stems

The stems are upright, stiff, and branched. Small plants usually have an unbranched stem and one flower head; large plants have a stem with many branches and can have over 100 flower heads.



Non-invasive Look-alikes:

Hoary Tansyaster – Basal leaves are shorter, up to 4 inches (10 cm), and do not have a visible stem with opposite leaves. Flowers have daisy like appearance. Leaves are sharply toothed unlike knapweed.



Scarlet Gilia - The basal leaves are 0.8 to 3.1 inches (2-8 cm) and are far narrower and more abundant than knapweed. Flowers are long, tubular, and generally red.





DIFFUSE KNAPWEED

In general, the plant exhibits very similar characteristics to spotted knapweed which is much more common at Bogus Basin. They are best distinguished by the type of bracts (leaf like structures) that surround the base of the flowerheads. Diffuse knapweed's bracts are light yellowish green with a light brown margin, fringed in spines ending with a longer spine at the tip. Flowers are also generally white, although can be pink/purple.



Diffuse (left) vs Spotted Flowerhead

Non-invasive Look-alikes:

Same as Spotted Knapweed.



RUSH SKELETONWEED

Plant grows 12-48 inches (30-123 cm) tall with taproots up to 48 inches deep. It is native to Eastern Europe. Spreads via seeds and damaged taproots that grow adventitious root buds that can each form a new plant. Common in disturbed soils. All plant parts exude a milky latex when broken.

Flowers

Flowering occurs throughout the summer. Flower heads occur singly or in groups of up to 5 along branches and at branch tips; heads are comprised of 7 to 15 individual, bright yellow florets that look like lobed- tipped petals.



Leaves

Basal leaves resemble a dandelion-like rosette; sharply toothed leaves are hairless, 1.5 to 2.5 inches (4-6 cm) long, and 0.5 to 2 inches (1-5 cm) wide. On a mature plant, alternating leaves are small and sparsely located



Stems

Stems are slender and generally smooth, except on the base which exhibits coarse, downward bent hairs growing in wiry pattern from the base.





SCOTCH THISTLE

Scotch thistle was introduced to the United States as an ornamental plant in the 1800s. It can grow up to 12 feet (4m) tall and 5 feet (1.5m) wide with small pink-purple flowers. It is native to Europe and Asia.

Flowers

The plant forms dark pink to purple globe-shaped flower heads, 1-2 inches (2-5 cm) in diameter, which stand alone on branch tips and bloom July-October.



Leaves

The leaves are oblong and prickly, being toothed or slightly lobed along the margins. The tip of the leaf ends in a short sharp point. The blades of the lower leaves can measure up to 12 inches (30 cm) long. Since this plant is a biennial, only the basal rosette of leaves is present in the first year of its growth.



Stems

Branched stems are covered in hairs, giving it a blue green appearance, and have vertical rows of prominent, spiny, wings throughout.



CHEATGRASS

Highly invasive annual grass that typically grows 6 to 24 inches (15-60 cm) tall in open dry areas with sandy or gravelly soil. Especially prevalent in recently disturbed soils.

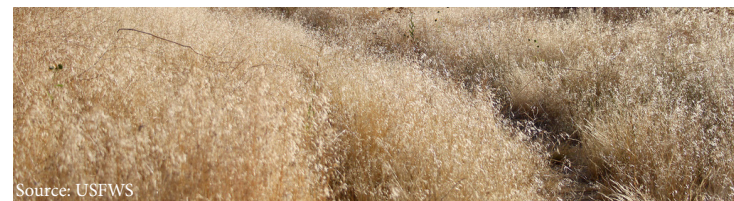
Leaves & Stem

The leaves and stem are bright green and hairy for a short time in early spring, less than 5mm in width. They later turn reddish then light tan.



Flowers

It has a nodding seed head with many finely hairy drooping spikelets. Seeds are yellow to reddish brown. The barbed awn (long spike at the end) is 5/8 in. or longer embedding itself in whatever walks by.





LEAFY SPURGE

Native to Europe, leafy spurge invades prairies, pastures, and other open areas. They can completely overtake large areas of land and displace native vegetation. The plant's white, latex sap seriously irritates the skin of people and animals and can cause human blindness upon eye contact. Taproots are extraordinarily deep, up to 26 feet.

Flowers

Small, showy, yellow-green bracts open in late May. Forms umbrella-shaped flower clusters with seven to ten flowers at the top of each stem; single, stemmed flowers grow below. Blooms June to fall.



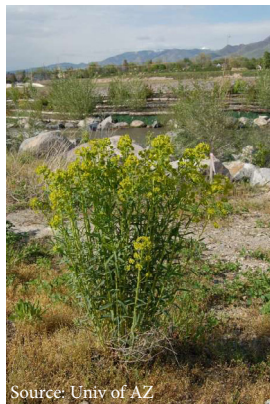
Leaves

Leaves are lance shaped, smooth and 1-4 inches (2.5-10.2 cm) long. They are arranged alternately along the stem, becoming shorter and more oval shaped towards the top of the stem growth.



Stems

Normally 24-36 inches (60-90 cm) tall. The stem is smooth and bluish-green.



If spotted, please send photo and location to ncollins@bogusbasin.org



MEDUSAHEAD

Medusahead is a non-native, winter annual grass that can grow up to 2 feet (60 cm) tall. Plants bloom in the spring after many other nonnative annual grasses. The silica content of medusahead slows the decomposition of the old plant parts, resulting in the formation of a thick, persistent layer of thatch which alters soil temperature and moisture dynamics, limiting the germination of other species.

Flowers

Each stem produces a single seed head. Nodding spikes are dense bristly seed heads with long awns reaching 1-4 inches (2-10 cm) in length giving it its Medusa like appearance. Seed heads have 2 sets of bristles; shorter ones extend at an angle, longer ones are erect. Each spikelet contains one seed. Each seed head produces 20 or more seeds.



Leaves & Stems

This slender grass grows 6-20 (15-50 cm) inches tall. One or more stems arise from the base of the plant. Leaf-blades are somewhat rolled.



Non-invasive Look-alikes:

Medusahead is sometimes confused with foxtail barley or squirreltail. Medusahead matures later than other annual grasses, so it can often be recognized by its green color when other grasses have turned brown. Medusahead spikes will also remain intact throughout the year.

QUESTIONS?

For questions or comments, email ncollins@bogusbasin.org

To learn more about Bogus Basin's Sustainability and Environmental Education programs, visit bogusbasin.org/about-bogus/sustainability/ or bogusbasin.org/programs/environmental-education/

