

News Release: March 14, 2016  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Weed by Any Other Name is...A Weed! Sara Sly, WSU Ferry County Extension Master Gardener Weeds. We all have them, whether they are just a harmless plant in a place you don't want it or something that could be invasive or even poisonous. The best definition of a weed I have found is, "a plant that is competitive, persistent, invasive and interferes with human activity." I like this definition because it covers those cute pansies that spring up everywhere, dandelions in the lawn and poisonous hoary alyssum. I like dandelions since most of the year my yard is covered in snow or not growing because we don't water it. To me they are bright spots in a boring space. Pansies, especially the mini ones called violas or Johnny Jump Ups, drive me crazy. When I bought Dad a lilac there was a cute little viola which we also planted. Since then they have spread all over the yard. Many harmless weeds like pansies come from the nursery, hardware store or a general store with groceries, plants, hardware, clothes and everything else you could want. Check your plants before buying them and make sure no weeds or unwanted plants are hitching a ride.

No matter what kind of weed you have the best control methods are to catch them while they are few and small. Pulling weeds can be a boring job or the sort of relaxing task I need after a busy day at work. Pulling the weed breaks the cycle of flower, seed, new weed. If the weeds are too many or you don't find weeding relaxing you can cover the open ground with plastic, mulch or a thick crop of plants that smother the weed seeds before they can sprout.

Invasive or noxious weeds are something we all need to be aware of. Invasive weeds can take over a yard or garden in just a season or two and prevent the growth of plants you want. Noxious weeds are poisonous to either people, animals or both. The Ferry County Weed Board has great information on what weeds are on the list for invasive or noxious plants that pose a hazard in one way or another. They also have great tips on how to control the weeds through biocontrol, pulling or, if necessary, what kind of herbicide to use and how to use it safely.

Another great resource for any plant, weed or not, is <http://hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu>. Washington State University created and maintains Hortsense; a great website where you can search for plants, weeds, insects, etc. and find information on growing, avoiding, identifying and enjoying your yard and garden. As a Master Gardener this site is the first place I go when someone asks me a question. Even if it is about a weed I am familiar with, I check what WSU has found to work through scientific research. I know that something which works for one person may or may not work for another. I prefer to use proven methods to control weeds so I don't waste my time or money with something that doesn't work. Happy gardening!

To harvest more information contact Ferry County WSU Master Gardeners with garden practice questions. 509-775-5225, x1116, [jordant@wsu.edu](mailto:jordant@wsu.edu), 350 E. Delaware Ave. #9 Republic, WA 99166 in the basement of the Courthouse. For Extension publications go to <https://pubs.wsu.edu/>. Extension programs and policies are consistent with federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, sex, religion, age, color, creed, national or ethnic origin; physical, mental or sensory disability; marital status, sexual orientation, or status as a Vietnam-era or disabled veteran. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.