

# Mason County Noxious Weed Control

Figwort Family

## Butterfly Bush

*Buddleja davidii*

### Identification Tips

- Flowers are cone shaped and usually purple (can be orange or white) with an orange center and have 4 petals.
- Grows up to 15 feet tall.
- Young stems are green. Older branches are arched and turn gray-brown with peeling bark.
- Leaves are opposite and narrow-egg shaped, growing 4 to 10 inches long and 1 to 3 inches wide.
- Upper surface of leaves are in deep green to gray with a fuzzy white underside.



### Non-Regulated Class B Noxious Weed: Control Recommended

### Biology

- Deciduous shrub that blooms in mid summer.
- Plants can produce seed during the first year, producing up to 40,000 seeds per flower head.
- Seeds are lightweight and winged.
- Seeds remain viable in the soil for 3 to 5 years.
- Cut stems can resprout, allowing plants to spread vegetatively as well.

### Impacts

- Can infest gravel bars, river banks, roadsides, and other recently disturbed areas.
- Outcompetes native shrubs, such as willow and salmon berry, reducing habitat and forage for wildlife.
- Some evidence suggests butterfly bush alters soil nutrients.

### Distribution

- Butterfly bush is native to China and was sold as a garden ornamental in the United States and United Kingdom.
- It can now be found infesting pastures, roadsides, vacant lands, gravel bars, and recently logged areas throughout Western Washington.
- Prefers sunny sites with well-drained soil, but will thrive in a variety of locations.



Butterfly bush can invade streams, gravel bars, and disturbed areas. It degrades habitat by displacing native vegetation.

**QUESTIONS? Contact Mason County Noxious Weed Control at:**

**(360) 427-9670 ext. 592 or [patriciag@co.mason.wa.us](mailto:patriciag@co.mason.wa.us)**

**<https://extension.wsu.edu/mason/natural-resources/noxious-weed-program/>**

## What You Can Do

While there is no legal requirement for controlling butterfly bush in Mason County, the Board recognizes this plant as invasive and is collecting information and providing education on control. The Board encourages and recommends control of existing populations especially in natural lands and forests.

## Control Methods

A combination of control methods is typically required to eradicate butterfly bush. Butterfly bush can be difficult to control once it has established at a site.

## Prevention

**Do not purchase or plant butterfly bush. If you already have butterfly bush, take steps to remove plants.** If you do not plan to remove the plant, it is important to deadhead to prevent seed dispersal. **Composting seed heads is not recommended.** Bag and place in household garbage. Do not dump yard waste containing butterfly bush in your yard or other natural areas, as plants can easily reroot.

## Manual Control

Small plants and seedlings can easily be hand pulled. Pulled plants and cut branches can re-root when left on bare ground. To avoid new infestations, never dispose of butterfly bush in compost, natural areas, or roadsides. Pulled and cut plants can be burnt or placed in the garbage. Be sure burning is allowed in your area before choosing this disposal method.

## Cultural/Grazing

Goats can be used to initially clear an area. This approach does not eradicate infestations, as goats will not kill butterfly bush plants. The infestation must receive follow-up manual or chemical control.



Deadhead and dispose in garbage when you start to see seed heads form.

## Try these non-invasive alternatives in your garden!



**Pacific ninebark**  
*Physocarpus capitatus*



**Twinberry**  
*Lonicera involucrata*



**Weigela**  
*Weigela florida*



**Red elderberry**  
*Sambucus racemosa*

Can't live without butterfly bush? Ask your nursery for sterile cultivars that do not produce viable seed!



## Chemical

**Choose a formulation that is appropriate for your site. Follow the label exactly as written and use only at rate prescribed. Do not apply herbicide over or near water bodies.**

The cut stump method using a product containing triclopyr or glyphosate is considered an effective treatment. Selective herbicides, such as triclopyr, will not impact grasses. Using cut stump method lessens risk of injuring neighboring plants during application. The most effective control strategy will integrate multiple control methods.

**Contact the Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board with questions about herbicide application.**

