



Join the Fight Against Invasive Species

The Yakima County Noxious Weed Control Board is here to help you.

by Sue Bird, Yakima County Invasive Weed Control Board,
for Yakima Valley Master Gardeners



We believe that education and public relations are key elements in the fight against invasive species. If landowners don't know the plant is a problem, they don't know that it has to be controlled. We aim to work with landowners to identify problem species as well as help develop control plans to deal with them.

In order to educate the public about plants that have been deemed invasive, we have inspectors who look for the bad plants and work with the landowners when we find plants of concern. However, we would prefer to encourage the education prior to finding said plants in the fields and on the roadsides of Yakima County. By the time we can see them from a roadside, they are probably close to reproduction.

Our office offers presentations and field visits to educate the landowners and citizens of Yakima County about plants of concern. We tailor presentations to groups based on age and interests: for example, talking to 4-H clubs, FFA chapters, and

Ravenna grass planted in a landscape (top photo) can look dramatic, but when it sends its seeds into the wild, it becomes an invasive weed (bottom photo).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUE BIRD

After School Garden/Horticulture clubs, and Science and Ag Classes. We also meet with Road Associations, Rotaries, Irrigation Districts, and Landowner groups, clubs, and associations. Presentations can be specific about certain topics: i.e. escaped ornamental plants, toxic plants that threaten our families and pets, problem plants in pastures or on roadside, and how invasive plants affect our environment, ecology, and habitats.

We attend functions such as Farm Days, Fairs, and Fun Days throughout the county to make public contacts. We are here to help control the invasion of noxious weeds.

If you have plants you wish to have identified, we will visit your site and possibly take samples and photos of the infestation. If we do not know what the plant is, we will take samples and photos back to the office and contact plant scientists for further identification. Landowners can contact our office with questions at any time.

Quite often, describing the plant over the phone will do the trick. Be sure to include shape of stem—is it round, rigged, jointed? Leaf—is it fuzzy, waxy, rough, smooth, heart-shaped, round, pointed, long and narrow? Does it grow upright or spread out on the ground? Is it woody? Does it have white sap when broken?

If you bring us a sample, please include the following:

- bring the entire plant if possible. Include root, stems, leaves, flowers if flowering, and seeds if they have gone to seed. (We hope to identify plants prior to going to seed to prevent potential problems.)

- information about where the plant was found, such as pasture, lawn, landscape, roadside, ditch bank, creek, pond, forest, desert, or irrigated farmland.

Place entire plant in a plastic bag with some DRY paper or a paper towel. If you cannot get it to us the day you collect it, please place the bag in the refrigerator and bring it in as soon as possible.

DO NOT PUT WATER In the bag *unless* it's a plant growing in the water. Placing the plant in water in a ziplock bag on the floorboard of the truck, often turns to green goo before we see it. Do NOT throw the plant on the dash of the truck to bring in, and then forget about it for a week and expect us to identify it.

If you would like to send us a photo of the plant in question, please include entire plant. Area it is growing, and then pics with a neutral backdrop: hold it with a white or neutral colored wall behind it away from other plants that may not be the same. Provide a size reference in the photo, your hand, an ink pin, a coin, or object that shows size of plant, flower, leaf, etc.

You can send photos via email to susan.bird@co.yakima.wa.us or effie.shinn@co.yakima.wa.us.

Make sure the subject line includes "FOR PLANT IDENTIFICATION". If you wish to text the photos, call our office for the inspector's cell phone numbers, and give the plant description to our personnel in the office.

If you would like to have a presentation given to your group, or have a display at a function, please contact Susan Bird, Outreach & Education Specialist, for scheduling, and discuss the interests, ages, and size of the group or event. Education and Public Relations are our goals. Building communications with the residents of our county is essential for noxious weed control. We are here to help.

ADDRESS: Yakima County Noxious Weed Control Board, 1213 S. 18th Street, Yakima, 509-574-2180.

