Canada Thistle

Cirsium arvense

Perennial

Grows 1 to 4 feet tall

Leaves are lance-shaped and irregularly lobed with spiny, toothed margins

Purple to white flower heads are 0.5 to 0.75 inch in diameter

Very aggressive and difficult to control

Spreads by roots and seeds

Spotted Knapweed

Centaurea maculosa

Biennial

Grows 1 to 3 feet tall

Single flowering heads develop at the end of branches from June to October

Flowers are pinkish-purple or rarely cream-colored, with spots on bracts

Spreads by seed and can invade healthy rangelands

Perennial Pepperweed

a.k.a. **Tall Whitetop**

Lepidium latifolium

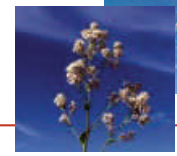
Perennial

Grows 2 feet to 6 or more feet tall

White flowers resemble baby's breath

Forms dense colonies

Spreads by seed and creeping roots



Diffuse Knapweed

Centaurea diffusa

Short-lived perennial

Grows 1 to 2 feet tall

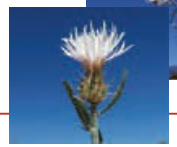
Forms dense canopy

Leaves are finely divided

Purple or white flower heads

Spreads by seed

Dries out in fall and will roll like tumbleweed



Russian Knapweed

Centaurea repens

Perennial

Grows 1.5 to 3 feet tall

Forms dense colonies

Black roots may grow deeply in some soils

Pink, white or lavender cone-shaped flower heads are 0.25 to 0.5 inch in diameter

Spreads by seed and roots

Dalmatian Toadflax

Linaria genistifolia ssp. dalmatica

Perennial

Grows to 3 feet tall

Heart-shaped waxy green leaves

Yellow flowers look like snapdragon

Has extensive, deep root system

Spreads by seed and underground root stalks

Saltcedar

a.k.a. **Tamarisk**

Tamarix ramosissima

Deciduous or evergreen, deep-rooted shrubby tree

Grows 5 to 20 feet tall

Reddish-brown bark and pink to white flowers

Forms dense colonies

Spreads by seed and disturbed roots

Red Sesbania

Sesbania punicea

Perennial shrub to small tree

Seeds are highly toxic

Pea like red orange flower clusters

Seed pods are 3 to 4 inches long and, when mature, will rattle if shaken

Forms dense monocultures in riperian/wetland areas

Also known as scarlet wisteria or rattlebox

Spreads by seeds

Oblong spurge

Euphorbia oblongata

Perennial

If ingested can be toxic to humans, horses and cattle

The milky sap is a strong skin irritant to some people

Bracts are bright yellow to green

Plants can reach 1 to 4 feet in height

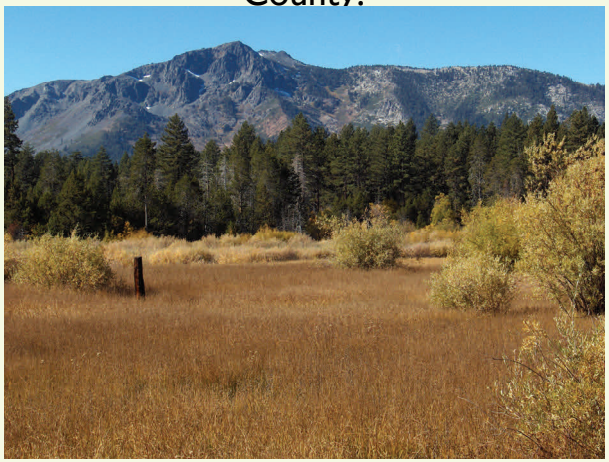
Spreads with creeping, deep roots

Photo By Bob Case

Don't let

Noxious Weeds

Ruin the Native Beauty of El Dorado County!



Invasive weeds:

Increase soil erosion and water pollution in streams and rivers.

Restrict opportunities for hiking, rafting, camping and other recreational activities.

Displace threatened and endangered plants and animals.

Reduce plant and animal diversity because of weed monocultures— single plant species that overrun all others in an area.

Cost millions of dollars for treatment and loss of productivity to public and private landowners.

Decrease the value and beauty of the land.

An unchecked Oblong spurge population in El Dorado County

How it happens

Weeds spread many ways. Nature often assists weeds by carrying seeds on the wind, surface water, through streams, rivers and irrigation ditches. Any time people, or their animals, work or play in areas infested by weeds there is a chance they will move the infestation to a new area. Small seeds can easily hitchhike on clothing and shoes only to dislodge themselves in new virgin areas. When a vehicle is driven through a weed infested site, weed seeds may become lodged between the tire treads, in the coils of a winch, behind the license plate, or in cracks and crevices on the underside of a vehicle. Likewise, bicycle tires and undercarriages should also be carefully inspected for weed hitchhikers. The source of many noxious weed infestations has been traced to roads, trails, railroads and other transportation corridors. Pets and livestock can carry seeds in their coats, on the bottom of their feet, or even in their digestive systems. Be sure to clean out your horse's hooves before trailer loading. Also be aware that contaminated hay readily spreads weed seeds wherever it is moved. Noxious weed seed has the ability lie dormant for multiple years. Invasive weed seeds are triggered to germinate when they fall down to fertile soil, or when the surrounding soil they has been lying dormant in is disturbed. As a result, many recreationalists will see noxious weeds emerge in areas where they have never seen them before. Unfortunately, several noxious weeds have already become established in El Dorado County, affecting thousands of acres of land. They continue to thrive, especially on parcels of land where they go untreated for long periods of time.

Noxious or merely a nuisance?

A weed is any plant that grows where it is not wanted. A noxious weed not only grows where it is not wanted, but is also detrimental or destructive and difficult to control or eradicate. Noxious weeds choke out native plants and lead to a loss of the native wildlife that depends on native plant species to survive. Invasive weeds are capable of destroying healthy forests and parks. Most of our wildlife depends on healthy foraging land for survival.

Please

Help protect our native forest and park lands from weed invasion and preserve wildlife

Who is responsible for controlling noxious weeds?

According to California state law, certain noxious weeds (such as those listed on the back of this brochure) are illegal to propagate for profit or ornamental uses. This means that responsibility falls to everyone, from hikers to Federal land managers to keep noxious weeds out of California.

What can I do to help?

Prevention is the best remedy to keep invasive weeds from establishing themselves in El Dorado County. Always check your clothing, shoes, pet's fur and feet for seeds after nature hikes. As a precaution, brush off your body and your pet's body before leaving the area. Don't forget to check your car or bicycle for unwanted plant seeds or other debris. If you've been driving or riding your vehicle or bike through muddy terrain, be sure to hose off the mud at or near the site. Report any suspect weeds so action may be immediately taken to remove the threat from our fragile ecosystem.

If you believe you've found an invasive weed please contact:

El Dorado County Department of Agriculture
311 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA
(530) 621-5520

Plant photos used courtesy of: Whitson, T. D., Burrill, L. C., Dewey, S. A., Cudney, D. W., Nelson, B. E., Lee, R. D., and Parker, R. 1996. *Weeds of the West*. The Western Society of Weed Science and Western United States Land Grant Universities Cooperative Extension Service.