



Noxious and Invasive Weed Program - <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/weedcontrol>

## A guide to removal and disposal of noxious weeds in Minnesota

Minnesota's Noxious Weed Law requires that listed species are controlled or eradicated on all public and private lands within the state (MS 18.75-18.91). Removal of noxious weeds from the habitats they have invaded results in large amounts of plant material that landowners and managers often feel the need to dispose of. The following information is intended to educate landowners and land managers regarding what can and cannot be done legally in Minnesota regarding the removal of noxious weeds on their properties.

### **Two simple guidelines to follow when dealing with noxious weeds on an individual property:**

- 1. Kill but do not remove weeds from an infested area when possible*
- 2. If removal of weed plant materials from an infested site is necessary, properly contain and transport the materials to an approved site.*

**You do not have to remove noxious weed materials from your property.** In fact it is preferred that you leave materials on site and either destroy them by a legal means or allow to compost. The Minnesota Noxious Weed Law does not require removal of listed species from your property. It simply requires eradication (killing the plant) or control (preventing seed production and spread) – depending on the regulatory designation for each species. The goal of the law is to prevent the growth and spread of harmful plants to new areas. Removal from your property increases the potential of accidentally spreading these plants while transporting them. Land with established weed infestations already has a viable seedbank, i.e., seeds that are deposited into the soil from past generations that are dormant. *Therefore, composting or destroying plants on site is the best and safest method to prevent future spread to new areas.*

**It is illegal to transport noxious weeds and their propagating parts in Minnesota without a permit, unless you are transporting to a specific location for lawful disposal or destruction!** Noxious weed propagating parts are structures that allow the plant to regenerate and spread. These include seeds, cuttings, buds, shoots, stems and root fragments. Minnesota Statute 18.82 prohibits the transport of listed prohibited and restricted noxious weed propagating parts without issuance of a special permit that can be obtained from the MDA or the County Agricultural Inspector from the jurisdiction where the movement will occur. The permit is intended to ensure that the person requesting transport will take every measure necessary to avoid spreading any propagating parts while in route. Each permit also indicates how the propagating parts will be destroyed once they reach their place of destination. If the plants main mode of reproduction is by seed and has been removed prior to seed production, then it is legal to transport without a permit. *You do not need a permit if you are transporting noxious weed propagating parts to a designated location for lawful disposal if you follow the conditions specified previously for containment during transport.*

**Disposal of noxious weeds into solid waste trash bins is against the law!** Although it may seem easy for the average landowner to rid themselves of a few pesky noxious weeds growing on their property by adding them to their solid waste containers, it is actually against state law. Minnesota Statute 115A.931 prohibits

placing yard waste into any municipal solid waste containers, at a disposal facility, or at a resource recovery facility for reasons other than composting or co-composting.

**Are compost sites a good place to dispose of noxious weeds and their propagating parts?** Due to the risk of noxious weed seeds surviving the composting process and potentially being spread to new areas in the resulting compost material, **it is safer to compost or destroy any noxious weed materials on site.** If you feel that you must remove noxious weeds and their propagating parts from your property, compost sites regulated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) may be an alternative.

Currently there are over 100 yard waste facilities registered by MPCA throughout Minnesota. These facilities are required to hold compost at a temperature of 131<sup>0</sup>F for at least 15 days. Yard waste sites are not monitored by MPCA to ensure that this requirement is met. Furthermore, not all noxious weed seeds will be devitalized by this requirement. If you do choose to dispose of noxious weeds at a yard waste site, look for sites that adhere to the national Seal of Testing Assurance standards. These facilities work hard to ensure that the temperature and length of time restrictions imposed by MPCA are met. In addition to yard waste sites, there are several Solid Waste Compost Facilities (SWCF) operating in the state that are regularly monitored by MPCA to ensure that compost is held at 131<sup>0</sup>F for a minimum of 15 days. Check with the MPCA to learn more about SWCF's and composting in Minnesota.

To locate an approved disposal site near you, visit: <http://goo.gl/maps/rXphi>

**How do I destroy noxious weeds on my property?** There are several ways you can destroy noxious weeds on your property.

- Control or eradicate stands in the field. Legal application of approved herbicides on established stands of noxious weeds will destroy the plants and let them desiccate naturally without the need for cutting or harvesting of the plants. Biological control agents may also be available for certain noxious weed species. On large established stands, bioagents may provide similar results to herbicides over a longer period of years. Check with the MDA Noxious Weed Program for more information about biological control.

-If you are mowing (and collecting the clippings), hand-pulling, digging, or using other forms of physical removal from the soil, plants can be composted onsite by selecting a specific area of the property that is used only for noxious weeds and other noxious plants. Plants can be piled above the ground or mixed with other soil and compost materials. It is not recommended to bury noxious weeds because the propagating parts will have a better chance of devitalizing above the soil. Regular check-ups to any composting area will be required to treat or pull any newly emerging seedlings over time. This method allows the noxious weeds to desiccate on your property without spreading the seeds to new areas and also concentrates them into a small area that can be much more easily maintained. Public land managers can utilize this technique also and post signage or fencing around the area to keep people out of the noxious weed and invasive plant compost area.

-Burning can also be used to destroy standing or collected noxious weeds on site. ***However, it is not recommended to burn poison ivy or Grecian foxglove since the chemicals in the smoke can be harmful to humans.*** Always check and follow your local laws and ordinances pertaining to open burning in fire pits and contact a professional if planning to burn large stands of noxious weeds.