

Invasive Plants in Alberta

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Fencelines and Road Allowances

Land owners and occupiers are responsible for controlling noxious weeds and destroying prohibited noxious weeds under the *Alberta Weed Control Act*. Listed plants in the Act cause problems for the environment, health or economy. Know your responsibilities under the Act. Regardless of where plants are located, prevention is always the most effective approach in dealing with invasive plants.

What You Need to Know

What is the problem?

Roads often act as corridors for the dispersal of invasive plants. Vehicles and machinery can disperse seeds, while road construction and maintenance operations disturb the soil, opening up spaces for invasive plants.

Populations of invasive plants also are often concentrated along fencelines because weeds along fencelines can be missed when control treatments are used on either side of the fence.

Invasive plant populations along roadsides and fencelines can be a source from which these plants spread, both along roads and into adjoining agricultural land and natural areas.

Occasionally, vegetation along road allowances is used for hay and will disperse weeds when transported.

All rural municipalities in Alberta conduct roadside vegetation management programs to control noxious and prohibited noxious weeds along public roads, as well as to reduce brush growth that hampers visibility along roads. These programs include both mowing and herbicide treatment. To avoid damage to crops on private land, municipalities normally spray only up to the fenceline, leaving a buffer zone.

Species to watch out for

Common invasive plants along roads and fencelines in Alberta:

- Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- perennial sow thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)
- yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*)
- scentless chamomile (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*)
- leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
- common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)
- ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)
- white cockle (*Silene latifolia* ssp. *alba*)
- tall buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*)
- field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*)



Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)



Perennial sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)

What you can do

Some municipalities in Alberta offer fenceline weed control programs. In these programs, weeds are treated with herbicide. This spraying may be done by the municipality free-of-charge or on a cost-shared basis, or the municipality may provide incentives for the work to be done by landowners. Contact your local Agricultural Fieldman for further information.

If landowners do not want herbicides applied on road allowances adjacent to their land, many municipalities offer a “No-spray Agreement” program. Under these agreements, the municipality leaves these areas unsprayed, and the landowner becomes responsible for weed control. Check with your local Agricultural Fieldman for details and to learn what types of control are acceptable.



Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)



Common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)



Ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)

Learn More

Find out more on this topic and access these additional resources at the following web page:
www.agriculture.alberta.ca/invasive-weeds

Example of a Fenceline Weed Control Program (Red Deer County)

Example of a Municipal No-spray Agreement program (County of Grande Prairie)

Best Practices For Managing Invasive Plants On Roadsides (British Columbia)

If using mowing to control invasive plants in road allowances under a no-spray agreement:

- Scout the road allowance to learn what invasive plants may be present, and keep records of where they are found.
- Dig or pull out isolated invasive plants before they can spread.
- Mow areas with invasive plants last, and clean equipment before moving to a new work area.
- Mow only before invasive plants have set seed.
- Avoid making hay in road allowances where regulated weeds occur.
- Remember that you are responsible for compliance with the *Alberta Weed Control Act*.



Yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*)



Scentless chamomile (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*)

General principles and resources

- Land owners and occupiers are responsible for controlling noxious weeds and destroying prohibited noxious weeds. Know your responsibilities under the *Alberta Weed Control Act*.
- Be alert for invasive plants and respond early when they are found.
- Reduce the introduction of invasive plants as well as the reproduction and movement of their seeds and plant parts.
- Reduce soil disturbance, which makes openings where invasive plants can establish.
- Use effective, appropriate methods to control invasive plants. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, municipal Agricultural Fieldmen and urban park departments can provide advice on control methods. Always follow label instructions when applying any herbicide.

Alberta Invasive Plant Identification Guide (from Wheatland County)

www.wheatlandcounty.ca/DocumentCenter/View/12

Alberta Invasive Species Council factsheets

www.abinvasives.ca

Alberta Weed Control Act and Regulations

www.agriculture.alberta.ca/weedcontrol-act

Alberta Weed Monitoring Network

www.agriculture.alberta.ca/weeds



Field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*)



White cockle (*Silene latifolia* ssp. *alba*)



Tall buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*)