

OUTDOORS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Meadow knapweed (*Centaurea x moncktonii*), a prohibited noxious weed on the eradicate list, infests a field in Koochiching County.

Finding, reporting noxious weeds

BY EMILIE JUSTENE
Minnesota Department of Agriculture

(This is the first in a series of regular columns by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture on the state's noxious weeds.) As preparations begin for this year's growing season, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture encourages people to learn about, look for, and report Minnesota's noxious weeds. The MDA, as the regulatory agency for managing noxious weeds, helps local governments with weed management and enforcement of the Minnesota noxious weed law. A noxious weed is defined by the Minnesota noxious weed law as an annual, biennial, or perennial plant that the commissioner of agriculture designates to be injurious to public health, the environment, public roads, crops, livestock, or other property. Noxious weeds are categorized into four lists: prohibited eradicate, prohibited control, restricted, and specially regulated. The worst of the weeds are on the prohibited eradicate list. The law requires weeds on this list to have all above and below ground plant parts destroyed. Collaboration with multiple agencies and organizations throughout the state helps the MDA successfully detect noxious weeds on the eradicate list and confirm unrecognized species. Here's how the process works: A report is made of a listed or unknown weed. The report must then be positively identified. Once

the plant has been identified, the treatment plan can be determined. A multi-agency group of plant scientists can be tapped for species identification. This group can also turn to expert botanists such as herbarium curators and the state botanist to aid with identification. Digital photos help to correctly identify the species, and a visit to the site of the report may also be necessary for additional data collection. There are several ways to report a noxious weed on the eradicate list to the MDA. A landowner can contact their county agriculture inspector to verify the presence of a noxious weed. The noxious weed can be reported to the Arrest the Pest voicemail at 888-545-6684 or email Arrest.ThePest@state.mn.us. Noxious weeds can also be reported to the Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System (www.eddmappings.org). Location information is necessary for reporting. We encourage landowners to take action by contacting the MDA when they suspect they found an eradicate list noxious weed. Together, we can reduce future economic and environmental costs by finding and controlling eradicate list species before they spread and become severely damaging. For more information on Minnesota noxious weeds, visit the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's website at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants/badplants/noxiouslist.aspx>.

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