

NOXIOUS WEEDS OF OURAY COUNTY

Ouray County Vegetation Management

STATE LIST A SPECIES: YELLOW STARHISTLE



Source for Yellow starthistle
flower picture



Source for Yellow starthistle
rosette picture

YELLOW STARHISTLE CHARACTERISTICS

- Rosette leaves resemble dandelions and have a flat appearance with woolly hairs
- Leaves on upper plant are narrow and short
- Stems are rigid and branch from the base
- Has deep taproot extending 3 feet or more
- Gray green to blue green plant 6 inches to 6.6 feet tall
- Upper and lower leaves are covered with thick stiff hairs, and fine cottony hairs
- Seedling leaves are spatula shaped, round at tip, and 2 to 3 inches long
- Reproduces by seed

STATE LIST A SPECIES: MYRTLE SPURGE



[Source for Myrtle spurge pictures](#)

MYRTLE SPURGE CHARACTERISTICS

- Perennial, herbaceous plant 4 to 6 inches tall and 18 inches wide
- Produces caustic sap, skin contact causes blisters. Ingestion causes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Can cause blindness if in eyes
- Blue green alternate leaves in close spirals
- Seeds can be projected up to 15 feet
- Reproduces by seeds and root fragments

STATE LIST A SPECIES: PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

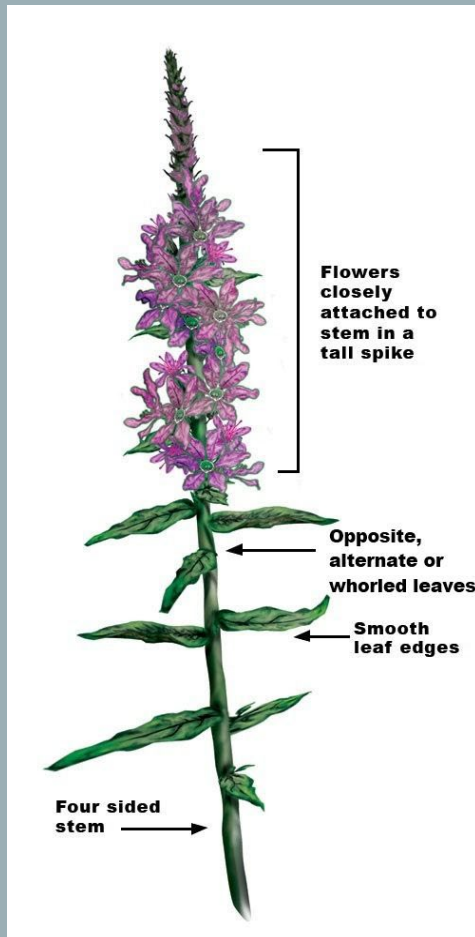


Source for Purple loosestrife flowers
picture



Source for Purple loosestrife leaves
picture

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE CHARACTERISTICS



- Herbaceous perennial with woody taproot
- Stems are stiff and square (4 sided)
- Opposite or whorled lanced shaped leaves
- Leaves have no teeth, they are smooth
- Leaves are ½ inch wide and 1 to 3 inches long
- Leaves and stems sometimes have soft hairs
- Can grow to over 8 feet tall
- Rose to purple colored flowers, with 5 to 7 petals
- Reproduces by seeds or root fragments

Source for Purple loosestrife diagram

STATE A LIST SPECIES: MEADOW KNAPWEED



Source for Meadow
knapeed pictures

MEADOW KNAPWEED CHARACTERISTICS

- Grows from woody crown
- Upright stems branch near the middle
- Leaves can be up to 6 inches long and 1 inch wide
- Lower leaves are toothed
- Middle and upper leaves are linear
- Flower heads are solitary, at tips of branches, and about the size of a nickel and round
- Bracts are light to dark brown and papery
- Reproduces by seed and sometimes by root fragments

OURAY COUNTY PRIORITY SPECIES: CHINESE CLEMATIS



[Source for Chinese clematis flower picture](#)



[Photo by Julie Kolb](#)

CHINESE CLEMATIS CHARACTERISTICS

- Herbaceous to woody vined perennial
- Flowers have four yellow sepals that look like petals
- Juice causes blisters!
- Produces numerous feathery long tailed seed fruits
- Reproduces by seeds
- Aggressive vine that climbs and covers trees, leading to tree death
- There is a native clematis which has leaves with rounded bottoms and groups of small white flowers



Photo by Julie Kolb

OURAY COUNTY PRIORITY SPECIES: SPOTTED KNAPWEED



Photos by Julie Kolb

SPOTTED KNAPWEED CHARACTERISTICS



- Biennial or short-lived perennial
- Plant is a gray-green color
- Small oval flowers which are pink to purple
- Bracts are marked at top with blackish upside-down “V”
- Leaves alternate, pale green, hairy and covered with shiny specks
- Leaves decrease in size above the middle of the stem
- Reproduces by seed

Photo by Julie Kolb

OURAY COUNTY PRIORITY SPECIES: LEAFY SPURGE

Leafy Spurge Characteristics



- Clump like appearance
- Linear leaves with smooth margins, alternate leaves which are 1 to 4 inches long
- Leaves are blue green, but turn orange in fall
- Perennial, starts emerging in April
- Contains a milky latex which is toxic to the skin
- Extremely deep root
- Erect smooth stems
- Umbrella shaped flower clusters with 7 to 10 flowers at the top of each stem
- Reproduces by seeds and roots
- Seeds explode from pod and can travel up to 15 feet

OURAY COUNTY PRIORITY SPECIES: DAMES ROCKET



[Source for Dames rocket pictures](#)

DAMES ROCKET CHARACTERISTICS

- Biennial or perennial
- 1.5 to 3 feet in height
- Leaves lance shaped, toothed, and alternate
- Leaves decrease in size as they ascend the stem
- Flowers are pink, magenta, or white with 4 petals
- Stems upright, branched, and have rough hair
- Reproduces by seed
- Often sold in seed packets



[Source for Dames rocket picture](#)

OURAY COUNTY PRIORITY SPECIES: DIFFUSE KNAPWEED



Source for Diffuse knapweed pictures

DIFFUSE KNAPWEED CHARACTERISTICS

- Biennial or short-lived perennial
- Ball shape with numerous spreading branches on upper stem
- Flowers are usually white, solitary or in clusters of 2 or 3 at the end of branches
- Bracts have fringed spines with a longer lance-shaped spine at the tip. Leathery with obvious veins
- Stems and leaves are covered with short hairs making the plant look grey
- Basal leaves are short, stalked and often twice divided into lobes
- Reproduces primarily by seed but sometimes by crown



[Source for Diffuse knapweed flower picture](#)

OURAY
COUNTY
PRIORITY
SPECIES:
ABSINTH
WORMWOOD



Absinth Wormwood Characteristics

- Perennial
- Flowers are yellow, 1/8 inch wide, and drooping
- Up to 50,000 seeds per plant, viable for 3 to 4 years
- Leaves divided into deeply lobed leaflets, 2 to 5 inches long, light olive green in color
- Stems branch from root crown, and are covered in fine silky hairs
- Asteraceae (Sunflower family)
- Flowers July through September

[Source for Absinth wormwood picture](#)

STATE LIST B SPECIES:
HOARY CRESS (A.K.A. WHITETOP)



Source for whitetop pictures

HOARY CRESS CHARACTERISTICS

- Perennial
- White flowers, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide, 4 petals in flat topped clusters at ends of branches.
- Seeds develop within heart shaped seed capsules. 4,800 seeds per plant, and seeds are viable up to 3 years
- Leaves are alternate $\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 inches long and $\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, blue green with small white hairs, oval or oblong.
- Leaf margins can have teeth or be smooth.
- Lower leaves are stalked, upper leaves clasping
- Underground roots grow 12 to 30 feet per year
- Mustard family
- Reproduces by seeds and spreading roots

**STATE B LIST SPECIES:
OXEYE DAISY**



Source for Oxeye daisy picture

OXEYE DAISY CHARACTERISTICS



- Flowers are 1 to 2 inches wide, with yellow disc flowers in the middle. One flower at the end of each branch.
- Leaves alternate. Upper leaves are smaller, toothed and narrow, and clasp the stem. Lower leaves are spoon shaped and toothed.
- Stems are erect and hairless.
- Plants are 10 to 24 inches tall
- Perennial
- 200 seeds per flower head
- Reproduces vegetatively and by seed

Photo by Trevor James

STATE B LIST SPECIES: YELLOW TOADFLAX



[Source for Yellow toadflax pictures](#)

YELLOW TOADFLAX CHARACTERISTICS

- Perennial
- Plants are 1 to 2 feet tall
- Flowers are yellow, 1 inch long, with orange “throat.” In clusters at end of stem.
- Leaves alternate, 2.5 inches long, .25 inch wide
- Erect stems 1 to 2 feet long, multiple stems branch from base
- Plantaginaceae –Plantain Family
- Flowers June through September
- Reproduces by seed and creeping roots

STATE LIST B SPECIES: MUSK THISTLE



[Source for Musk thistle pictures](#)

MUSK THISTLE CHARACTERISTICS

- Large thick taproot that is hollow near surface
- Large pink to purple flowers, which are flatter and the size of a half dollar
- Mostly lacks hairs on the upper surface of leaves.
Leaves are waxy with a yellowish to white spine at tip
- 1 to 6 feet tall at maturity
- Reproduces by seed

[Source for Musk thistle picture](#)



STATE LIST B SPECIES: CANADA THISTLE



[Source for Canada thistle pictures](#)

CANADA THISTLE CHARACTERISTICS

- Has rhizomes and rarely takes on a rosette growth habit
- Flowers are pink to purple, sometimes white
- Alternately arranged lance shaped leaves
- Leaf margins range from smooth to spiny to somewhat toothed or lobed
- Hairs typically on underside of leaves
- Stems are both hairy and without hairs
- Reproduces by seeds and rhizomes

STATE LIST B SPECIES: RUSSIAN KNAPWEED



Russian Knapweed Characteristics

- Long-lived perennial
- Toothed or smooth leaves, covered with fine hairs, alternate
- Stems erect and branched 2 to 4 feet
- Taproot is black!
- Light pink to purple tear-drop shaped flowers
- Bracts have a clear papery tip
- Reproduces by root and seed

[Source for Russian knapweed picture](#)

STATE LIST B SPECIES: BULL THISTLE



[Source for Bull thistle pictures](#)

BULL THISTLE CHARACTERISTICS

- Erect biennial
- Long sharp spines on leaves
- Hairy leaves with coarse hairs on top and woolly hairs on underside
- Flower heads are “teardrop” shaped with spines extending around the base
- Pink to magenta flower heads
- Spines along entire stem
- Usually less than 5 feet tall
- Reproduces by seed

STATE LIST B SPECIES: HOUNDSTONGUE



Source for Houndstongue pictures

HOUNDSTONGUE CHARACTERISTICS



- Leaves lance shaped hairy and rough (resembling a dog's tongue)
- Lower leaves 4 to 12 inches long
- Leaves alternate up the stem
- Hairy and course stems
- Entire plant is covered in long soft hairs
- Flowers reddish purple, about 1/3 inch wide
- Taproots can be 3 feet deep, and are black
- Reproduces by seed

Source for Houndstongue flower picture

STATE LIST B SPECIES: TAMARISK (A.K.A SALT CEDAR)



Tamarisk Characteristics

- Tall tree with feathery green foliage
- Flowers appear in spikes pink, pale pink, or white in color
- Leaves alternate, and scale like similar to cedar/juniper leaves
- Branches are dark brown to reddish-brown
- Reproduces vegetatively and by seed

Source for Tamarisk picture

STATE LIST C SPECIES: COMMON BURDOCK

Common Burdock Characteristics



- Biennial
- Leaves large, dark green, heart shaped, very hairy. Alternate with toothed or wavy margins
- Stem erect, 3 to 10 feet tall and coarse
- Flowers pink to purple
- Spines at base of flower often have a hook at the end
- Asteraceae Family
- Reproduces by seed

[Source for Common burdock picture](#)

NUISANCE WEED: KOCHIA



Source for Kochia picture

KOCHIA CHARACTERISTICS

- Seedling is fuzzy, and soft with silver green leaves
- Adult leaves are lance shaped, narrow, and green
- Leaves 1 to 2 inches long and alternate
- Leaves red tinge or red depending on maturity
- Upright stems with many branches, can have red stripes
- Deep roots
- Reproduces by seed



NUISANCE WEED: RUSSIAN THISTLE



Russian Thistle Characteristics

- Seedling leaves soft, green and needle-like
- Mature leaves short and tipped with a spine
- Stems are slender, fleshy, and can have red or purple stripes
- Feels prickly like a thistle
- Reproduces by seed
- Is the classic tumble weed of the Western United States

Source for Russian thistle picture