



NOXIOUS WEED GUIDE

December 2023





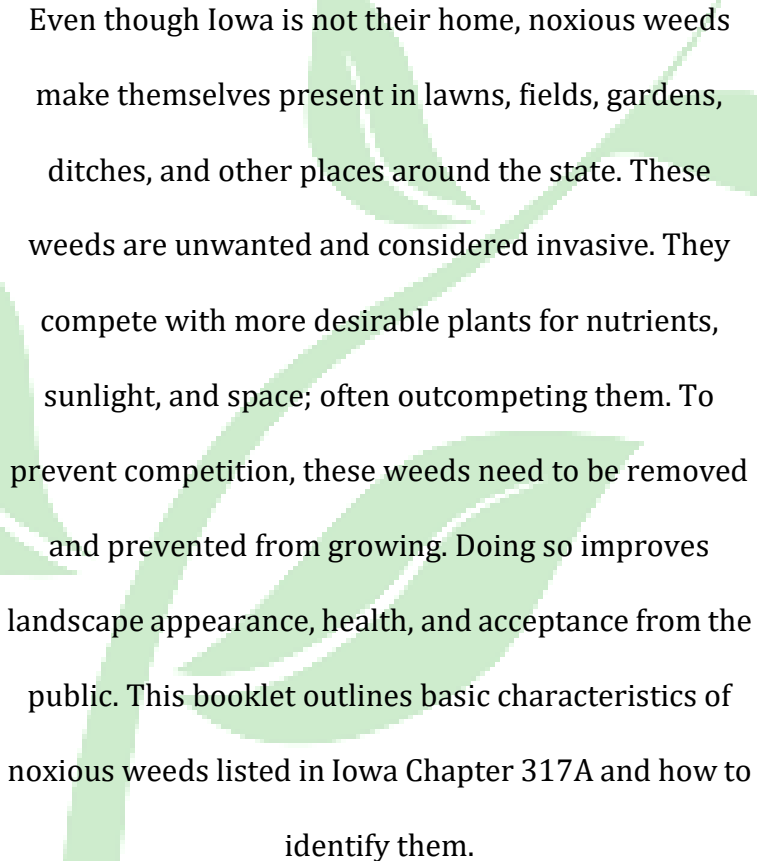
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! – Caution During Management

May Contain Sharp Parts

Introduction



Even though Iowa is not their home, noxious weeds make themselves present in lawns, fields, gardens, ditches, and other places around the state. These weeds are unwanted and considered invasive. They compete with more desirable plants for nutrients, sunlight, and space; often outcompeting them. To prevent competition, these weeds need to be removed and prevented from growing. Doing so improves landscape appearance, health, and acceptance from the public. This booklet outlines basic characteristics of noxious weeds listed in Iowa Chapter 317A and how to identify them.

Buckhorn (*Plantago lanceolata*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Flowering
- *Leaves:* narrow, long
- *Bloom:* June-October
- *Flowers/Seeds:* small, brown flowers



Buckthorn (*Rhamnus spp.*) *not to include Frangula alnus or Rhamnus frangula

Perennial

Characteristics:

- Produces a black fruit
- *Vegetation Color:* Bark is grey-brown, under layer in yellow-green
- *Stem Type:* Woody stem
- *Leaves:* dark green, oval, slightly toothed
- *Bloom:* May-June
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Small flowers with white or green-yellow petals



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Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) !

Biennial

Characteristics:

- *Height at Maturity:* 3' to 6'
- *Vegetation Color:* Dark green, sharp hairs
- *Stem Type:* Spiny, white hairs
- *Leaves:* Simple, alternate
- *Bloom:* June-August
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Blue/purple bulb



Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) !

Perennial

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* hollow, grooves
- *Leaves:* alternate, prickly
- *Bloom:* July - August
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Purple, pink or white cluster flowers



Cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*) !

Annual

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* slightly ribbed, purple-specked
- *Leaves:* Simple, toothed, heart-shaped
- *Bloom:* July-October
- *Flowers/Seeds:* No flowers, green burs



European Morning Glory/Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- Vine
- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Round
- *Leaves:* Simple
- *Bloom:* June-August
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Funnel, white flowers



Horse Nettle (*Solanum carolinense*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- Yellowish prickles with star-shaped hair
- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Spiny
- *Leaves:* alternate, lobed
- *Bloom:* May-September
- *Flowers/Seeds:* 5-lobed lavender/white flowers (Star-shaped)



Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- Toxic Milky Sap
- *Vegetation Color:* Greenish-yellow
- *Stem Type:* Woody Stem
- *Leaves:* Long and narrow
- *Bloom:* May-June
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Small, yellow-green flowers



Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- Produces red berries in August that are present into winter months
- *Vegetation Color:* Green, some spotted with pink or red
- *Stem Type:* Woody with thorns, green-red
- *Leaves:* Oval-shaped, toothed
- *Bloom:* May-June
- *Flowers/Seeds:* White flowers with many stamen



All other species of Thistles belonging to the genera of *Cirsium* and *Carduus* !

Perennial

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Hairy
- *Leaves:* alternate with spines along edges
- *Bloom:* June-October
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Pink/Purple bulbs



Palmer Amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*)

Annual

Characteristics:

- Small, sharp spine at leaf tip
- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Hairless
- *Leaves:* Alternate, smooth, oval
- *Bloom:* May-September
- *Flowers/Seeds:* small, yellow



Peppergrass (*Cardaria draba*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- Produce small, egg-shaped fruits
- *Vegetation Color:* Green/Grey-Green
- *Stem Type:* Semi-woody
- *Leaves:* smooth, slightly toothed
- *Bloom:* June-September
- *Flowers/Seeds:* small white flowers in dense clusters



Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) !

Biennial

Characteristics:

- Flowers in an umbel
- *Vegetation Color*: Glossy green
- *Stem Type*: Hollow; light green with purple spots
- *Leaves*: Feathery, triangular shape
- *Bloom*: June-August
- *Flowers/Seeds*: Small, 5 white petals



Puncture Vine (*Tribulus terrestris*)

Annual

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Densely Hairy
- *Leaves:* Opposite, hairy
- *Bloom:* April -October
- *Flowers/Seeds:* 5 yellow petals, ten stamens



Quack Grass (*Elymus repens*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- *Height at Maturity:* 2' – 3' tall
- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Hollow
- *Leaves:* Simple, alternate, smooth
- *Bloom:* June-August
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Upright flower spike with 3-5 leaves



Russian Knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Wiry
- *Leaves:* Alternate, top leaves are narrow while lower leaves are lobed
- *Bloom:* May-September
- *Flowers/Seeds:* White, pink, or lavender-blue flowers over a spherical, scaly base



Shattercane (*Sorghum bicolor*)

Annual

Characteristics:

- Produces yellow fruit
- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Smooth, covered in sheaths
- *Leaves:* Simple, alternate, no hairs
- *Bloom:* August-October
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Panicle of brown or gold flowers



Sheep Sorrel (*Rumex latissimus*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green, Red
- *Stem Type:* Ribbed, hairless
- *Leaves:* Alternate, toothless, hairless
- *Bloom:* May-August
- *Flowers/Seeds:* 3-sided, light green



Smooth Dock (*Rumex latissimus*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Stout
- *Leaves:* Hairless, toothless, wavy edges
- *Bloom:* April-May
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Small, light green flowers



Sour Dock (*Rumex crispus*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- Produces reddish brown 3-sided fruit
- *Vegetation Color:* Green/ Reddish-purple
- *Stem Type:* Stout
- *Leaves:* Smooth, waves/curled edges
- *Bloom:* April-May
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Small, greenish but turns reddish brown when mature



Sow Thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)

Perennial

Characteristics:

- *Height at Maturity:* 2' – 4'
- *Vegetation Color:* Blue-green
- *Stem Type:* Hollow
- *Leaves:* Alternate, 2-5 lobes with prickles
- *Bloom:* July-October
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Yellow, resembled dandelions



Teasel (*Dipsacus spp.*) !

Biennial

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Many small spines
- *Leaves:* Small, opposite, short spines
- *Bloom:* June-September
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Purple bulbs



Velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrasti*)

Annual

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Light to dull green
- *Stem Type:* Circular
- *Leaves:* Simple, alternate, heart-shaped
- *Bloom:* August-October
- *Flowers/Seeds:* 5 yellow-orange petals



Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*)

Biennial

Characteristics:

- Flowers in an umbel
- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Hollow; hairy
- *Leaves:* Alternate/Whorled
- *Bloom:* May-October
- *Flowers/Seeds:* White with purple flower in center



Wild Mustard (*Sinapis arvensis*)

Annual

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Round, hairy
- *Leaves:* Simple, alternate, serrated
- *Bloom:* Late Spring – Early Fall
- *Flowers/Seeds:* 4 Yellow Petals



Wild Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)

Annual

Characteristics:

- *Vegetation Color:* Green
- *Stem Type:* Stiff, hairy
- *Leaves:* Alternate, triangular, hairy, toothed
- *Bloom:* July-October
- *Flowers/Seeds:* Yellow petals, large brown center



Glossary

Alternate Leaves – Leaves alternate along the stem; a single leaf is attached at each node

Annual – grows for one season

Biennial – Grows once every two years

Panicle – A loose, branching cluster of flowers

Perennial – Plant that lives more than two years (grows back every year)

Serrated/Toothed – Leaf having notched margins or “saw teeth” on edges

Sheaths – A enclosing/protection structure

Simples Leaves – A leaf blade that is one piece

Spike – An unbranching inflorescence bearing sessile flowers

Spine – a firm, slender, sharp-pointed structure representing a modified leaf or stipule

Stamen – the male fertilizing organ of a flower, typically consisting of a pollen-containing anther and a filament

Opposite Leaves – Two leaves that are attached to the stem at the same level and opposite sides

Whorled – An arrangement of three or more appendages radiating in a circular or spiral arrangement from a point

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