Helping people help the land..

Otero Soil and Water Conservation District 3501 Mesa Village Dr. Alamogordo, NM 88310 (575) 437-3100 ext.3

The Otero SWCD is an equal opportunity employer.

Current SWCD Board of Supervisors:

Bob Nichols, Chairman
Rick Baish, Vice Chairman
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Colt Howland, Supervisor
Eddie Vigil, Supervisor
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Kristi Wright, District Conservationist
Erika Rodriguez, Rangeland Management Specialist
Amalia Montoya, Area Rangeland Specialist
Morgan Smith, Soil Conservation Technician

FSA Staff:
Cheyanna Reyes, County Executive Director
Amanda Wylie-Largeteau, Program Technician

District Employee:
Victoria Milne, District Manager

District board meetings are generally, the first Wednesday of each month at 9:30 am. The meetings are held in the same building, in the Forest Service's conference room located at 3463 Las Palomas Dr.

The USDA Alamogordo Service Center will be closed:
May 29th - Memorial Day; July 4th - Independence Day

Otero Soil and Water Conservation District
3501 Mesa Village Dr.
Alamogordo, NM 88310

2023

Spring

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Otero Soil and Water Conservation District

The Otero SWCD Noxious Weed Program Began April 1st

Herbicides are Reserved for Mapped and Licensed Cost-share Participants.
All Participants are required to present their current applicator's license at the time of herbicide purchase.
For the complete Noxious Weed Control Program Guidelines go online to: www.oteroswcd.org.

The Noxious Weed Season is Here!

Inside this issue:

Combating Noxious Weeds is a frustrating and endless fight. As soon as weed populations in one area begin to decline, seeds transported from untreated areas create new populations. Many of these seeds can remain viable, even on treated sites, for many years causing persistent infestations. If seeds fail to repopulate an area, many Noxious Weeds have complex and prolific root systems that will produce new plants from root buds.

The information we have compiled tells us to start treatment of Noxious Weeds early in the spring, after sufficient winter and spring moisture allows for vigorous or "active" plant growth. Preventing the plant from flowering and going to seed is a key element in controlling Noxious Weed spread.

Drought affects a plant's physiological growth. A plant will expend stored resources from the roots to produce

Russian knapweed

Continued Page 2...

Noxious Weed Spray Program

The Otero SWCD is focused on treating Noxious Weeds along Otero County right-of-way. We plan to target

Musk thistle, Russian knapweed, and Canada thistle beginning at High Rolls and working into the Sacramento Mountains. In an effort to prevent re-infestation of the treated right-of-way, the Otero SWCD offers landowners the opportunity to have the Commercial Applicator spray private lands through the cost-share program.

Participating landowners are only responsible for the cost of the Applicator's time spent on their property. The Otero SWCD picks up the chemical cost. The current Commercial Applicator rate is $65.00 per man hour. They can usually cover 2-3 acres in an hour depending on terrain.

Helping people help the land.

If you would like to participate in the cost-share program to have African rue, Malta starthistle, Russian knapweed, Musk thistle, or Canada thistle on your private land sprayed, please contact the Otero SWCD or fill out the Commercial Applicator Spray Program form online @ oteroswcd.org. Return by email or mail before May 31st to participate in the Spring 2023 Noxious Weed spray.

Spread the Word Not the Weeds!

The Noxious Weed Season is Here Continued...

flowers and seed even when plant growth is suppressed by drought. If a plant is not actively growing, taking in resources to replenish root stores, herbicides will be less effective as they will not be taken into the root system either. Thus continuous mechanical management is the best option during drought. After the first mechanical treatment is applied in early spring, re-treat the infestation every 8 weeks until the first frost in fall. This will not only impede seed production but also continually stress the plant's stored resources and eventually cause root kill.

This method, like most, will need to be repeated consistently for the next several years to ensure that roots and any viable seed remaining in the soil have expired.

Hoary cress

Malta starthistle

Noxious Weed Highlight-African Rue (Peganum harmala)

According to NMSU's Brush Buster's-African Rue Control: Ground Application flyer: African rue is native to North Africa and to the Mediterranean region. It was introduced into the U.S. around the 1920s and was first noticed in the Deming area but is now common near Carlsbad and throughout southern New Mexico. The plant favors disturbed and barren areas such as oil pads, roadsides, parking lots, corrals, stockyards and abandoned crop fields. African rue is expanding into rangeland and can dominate pastures as it is very drought tolerant. The plants deep and robust perennial root system is a major obstacle to control.

African rue is a small bright green succulent perennial herb with a bushy growth habit that reaches about one foot in height at maturity. The plant is one of the first to sprout in spring, initiating new growth in late March in southern New Mexico and dies back to it's roots in winter. After spring growth the plant often goes dormant as soils dry in early summer, but then will undergo a second growth phase later in the season as rains are received. Leaves are alternate, smooth, and divided deeply into narrow lobes. Single flowers are borne along the stem and in the leaf forks. Flowers have five white petals and produce a cylindrical 2-4 celled fruit with many seeds.

African rue is known to contain four poisonous alkaloids and is toxic to cattle, sheep and horses. The effects on livestock include loss of appetite, trembling and loss of coordination. Severe poisoning can result in hemorrhaging in the heart and liver. Because of its bad taste and smell the plant is usually avoided by livestock, unless other forages are unavailable. The seeds are the most toxic part of the plant, with leaves somewhat less toxic.

Because of African rue's elaborate root system, efforts to eliminate the plant by means other than herbicidal control are very difficult. The plant quickly grows back after mowing or burning, and deep cultivation only divides and spreads the roots. Numerous herbicides have been investigated for African rue control in field tests conducted by New Mexico State University, but only chemicals that are moved deep into the plant's root system have shown to be effective. Foliar active herbicides must be applied when the plant is actively growing to maximize chemical uptake and movement (translocation) through all portions of the plant.

Soil active herbicides are applied to the surface and must move with the wetting front after rain events, which are often minimal and infrequent in southern New Mexico. Herbicide control by either foliar or soil active methods is usually slow, requiring a year or more to kill a plant that is individually or broadcast sprayed.

For more African Rue information check the NMSU Weed Website: https://weeds.nmsu.edu.

This information is as found in the College of Agriculture and Home Economics Cooperative Extension Service's New Mexico Brush Buster's-African Rue Control: Ground Application flyer, June 2006 Las Cruces, NM.