

# THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

## Farm Stewardship Committee

### **Control Weeds** Source: *Maryland Department of Agriculture Office of Resource Conservation*

Weeds spread quickly, so look for new weed patches on your property regularly. Act immediately to treat them by using one or more of the weed control practices listed below. Team up with neighbors to improve effectiveness. Be sure to correctly identify weeds for proper control. Remember, weed control alone is not enough. It is also necessary to modify the practices that caused weeds to become established in the first place!

#### **LEARN TO SPOT WEEDS BEFORE THEY...**

- Choke out desirable plants
- Reduce the productivity of your pasture and natural areas
- Spread RAPIDLY!
- Affect the health of your livestock

#### **PREVENTION**

Good land management and proper fertility will help keep desirable vegetation healthy and weeds under control. Buy quality clean hay, straw, and bedding. Look for weeds on your property and remove them promptly. Well managed grazing will inhibit weed establishment and encourage the healthy development of pasture grasses.

#### **LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT**

Because livestock and wildlife can easily carry and spread weed seeds on their coats or in their feces, avoid moving livestock from a weedy area to a weed-free area. Some weed species, if eaten, will make livestock sick.

#### **MECHANICAL CONTROL**

Mow weeds as needed before they go to seed. Pull small weed patches and weeds near streams by hand.

#### **CHEMICAL CONTROL**

Herbicides can harm natural resources if used incorrectly, but are effective when applied correctly in the proper amounts and at the proper stage of plant growth. If you choose to hire a professional applicator, he/she must be licensed and certified by the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Regulation Section. Trained personnel are issued identification cards from the Department and the business license number must be displayed on the service vehicle. Call 410-841-5710 or visit [egov.maryland.gov/mda/pesticides](http://egov.maryland.gov/mda/pesticides) to search a database of licensed companies and certified pesticide applicators.

If you are a do-it-yourselfer and decide to apply herbicides to control weeds:

- Ask your local Extension office for recommendations on herbicides for your particular problem.
- Buy only the amount of herbicide that you need, for the current

weed problem.

- Read and follow all label instructions.
- Wear protective clothing specified on the label.
- Keep herbicides away from waterways.
- Do not spray in the morning when bees are active.
- Handle and mix all herbicides on a concrete slab to protect groundwater resources.
- Contain and clean up all spills immediately.
- Be sure herbicides will not reach and kill desirable trees and shrubs.
- It is best to keep horses out of pastures when applying herbicides.
- Contact your county's Extension office or hazardous waste disposal program for information on proper disposal of unwanted herbicides.

#### **MARYLAND NOXIOUS WEEDS**

The Maryland Noxious Weed Control Law requires landowners to eradicate or control weeds designated as noxious on all types of land including:

- Johnsongrass
- Musk Thistle
- Shattercane
- Plumeless Thistle
- Canadian Thistle
- Bull Thistle







#### **BEWARE OF THESE FAMILIAR PLANTS**

There are several common flowers, ornamental landscape plants, and trees that are poisonous to horses. Do not plant these species too close to the fence or where horses can eat them. For more information on plants that are toxic to horses, contact your local Extension office. If you suspect that your horse has eaten a toxic plant, contact your veterinarian immediately.

- Azaleas and Rhododendrons
- Black Locust
- Box Elder Maple
- Buckeye
- Cherry
- Daffodils
- Foxglove
- Hydrangea (pictured)
- Milkweed
- Mountain Laurel
- Oaks
- Red Maple
- Yews



## SOME COMMON WEEDS THAT ARE TOXIC TO HORSES

Plant Species	Poisonous Parts	Poison Symptom
 <p><b>EASTERN BLACK NIGHTSHADE</b> <i>(Solanum ptychanthum)</i></p>	Green berries and leaves	Marked thirst, diarrhea, loss of appetite, inability to stand, irregular gait, coma
 <p><b>JOHNSONGRASS</b> <i>(Sorghum halepense)</i></p>	Leaves and stems when plant is 12 inches or less	Slobbering or frothing, labored breathing, staggering, bleeding from mouth and nasal passages, muscle twitching
 <p><b>POISON HEMLOCK</b> <i>(Conium maculatum)</i></p>	All parts, especially leaves	Nervousness, twitching of muscles, salivation, lack of coordination, dilation of pupils, paralysis, birth defects, death
 <p><b>WHITE SNAKEROOT</b> <i>(Ageratina altissima)</i></p>	Leaves and stems	Marked trembling of skeletal muscles, lack of coordination, general body weakness, constipation, inability to swallow or stand
 <p><b>PURPLE MINT</b> <i>(Perilla frutescens)</i></p>	Leaves, stems, and flowers	Affected animal stands away from herd, usually with its head down, breathing very hard and loudly, usually with froth around mouth and nose; pneumonia, death
 <p><b>WILD CHERRY</b> <i>(Prunus serotina)</i></p>	Wilted leaves and young twigs	Nervousness, rapid and labored breathing, trembling or jerking muscles, blue color of mouth lining, bright red venous blood, bloating, bitter almond type odor in rumen gas, convulsions, and coma

*Keep in mind that when sprayed with herbicides, wilting plants can be very tasty to horses. If you suspect that your horse has eaten a toxic plant, contact your veterinarian immediately for an emergency visit.*