

2009-06-11 - Palisades Initiates Biological Weed Control

Palisades, in conjunction with City Park, the Spokane County Conservation District and Aphis instituted biological weed control program for Palisades Park.



Larry Skillestad and his assistant, Moose, from APHIS joined Garth Davis and Ben from the SCCD and Robbi Castleberry Tuesday morning to distribute a cute little black bug names *Mecinus janthinus* that loves to munch on Dalmation Toadflax.

To the surprise of everyone, *Mecinus* was already hard at work on the Dalmation Toadflax in the park. This stem boring weevil attacks the leaves and stems toadflax. Mining of the stems by the larvae causes premature wilting of shoots and suppresses flower



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bugs will eggs in the these will over and be to munch spring. Larry also



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Effects weevil are under stress. The lay stems, winter ready next

spotting what he termed "a really bad invader" called Houndstongue.

He recommended that anyone finding one, cut off the flowering stem and place it in a plastic bag for disposal.



Houndstongue is a poisonous plant that contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids that stop the reproduction of liver cells. Sheep are less susceptible than cattle or horses. When dried plants are found in hay they are still capable of poisoning and the animals do not recover.

As you recreate in the Park, take a moment to to locate a damaged dalmation toadflax plant. Please do not pull the plants and be careful not to knock these good bugs off the plants.

Larry will return in about two weeks to release APHIS bugs that will attack the spotted knapweed.