

It's hard to keep up with all of the invasive plants out there—this information sheet points out a few species of concern that may not be as well known as others. We will address this topic every June.



Photo courtesy of Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board

**Spurge laurel (*Daphne laureola*)** – Spurge laurel superficially resembles another non-native, laurel cherry (*Prunus laurocerasus*)—both are evergreen, shade-tolerant aggressively growing shrubs. However, the whorled arrangement of the leaves makes this species easy to identify. All aerial parts of spurge laurel are poisonous if eaten and leaves can cause a dermatitis reaction as well. Birds disperse seeds of this species far and wide, allowing spread into intact forests. This species usually occurs in small, isolated clumps but can spread to form dense stands if left unchecked.

**Reed sweetgrass (*Glyceria maxima*)** – Added to the Class A state noxious weed list. This wetland species has been sold as an ornamental and can form dense stands at the water's edge and floating mats of vegetation rooted to the bank. It can contain high levels of cyanide and be toxic to livestock and other animals. Currently sampled by Dept. of Ecology in only one location in Washington (in Snohomish County), reed sweetgrass is considerably taller (height up to 8' tall) than our native *Glyceria* spp.



Photo by Rasbak



Photo by Brian Keener, University of West Alabama

**Swollen bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*)** – A free-floating aquatic species, swollen bladderwort is also carnivorous (crustaceans and insect larvae fall into openings in the bladders on the root system that are triggered by disturbing tiny stem hairs). Only present, and therefore, easily observable, on the water surface when flowering from May to July, this species can spread to form dense mats at that time of the year, excluding native species during this critical period of the growing season. Dept. of Ecology has sampled this species in Cowlitz, Kitsap, Thurston, Mason and Pierce counties. It can be difficult to differentiate this species from native bladderworts.

**Floating primrose-willow (*Ludwigia peploides*)** – New addition to the Class A state noxious weed list. This species is in the evening primrose family (Onagraceae) and has a showy yellow flower. This species forms dense mats as it grows prostrate along the water or soil surface. Reproduction is primarily by fragmentation. Similar in appearance to another non-native invasive more common in our area, water primrose (*Ludwigia hexapetala*).



Photo courtesy of KCNWCP



Photo by Forest and Kim Starr

**Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*)** – A massive (up to 20' tall) ornamental grass that forms white, feathery plumes as flower heads. Everyone has seen this ornamental in residential areas and landscapes. Until recently, this introduced species was not known to spread (most individuals in this country were vegetatively propagated females). Now, both male and female individuals are being sold throughout the country and this species is beginning to spread by seed. Another species (*Cortaderia jutaba*) is known to spread even more aggressively than *C. selloana* and is present in California.

For more info, check: *Noxious/Invasive Weed Control* on the Links page of our website; UW Herbarium WTU Image collection site ([biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/image\\_collection.php](http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/image_collection.php)); weed board websites for your area; *Invasive Species in the Pacific Northwest*, edited by P. D. Boersma, S. H. Reichard and A. N. Van Buren.