

# UNL Extension: Acreage Insights

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Join the “Weed Watcher Team”

By Brent Meyer, Lancaster County Weed Superintendent

**Join our “NEW”  
Weed Watcher Team**

Can you help look for these pesky plants?

Become a Weed Watcher Volunteer and learn how to detect and Report these invasive plants before they get out of hand

**What is the Weed Watcher Program?** The Lancaster County Weed Watcher Program trains and supports volunteers to look for and report harmful invasive plants.

**Why Become a Weed Watcher?** Weeds cause real problems by disrupting ecosystems and decreasing the value of our land. Weeds grow so prolifically that they displace native plants. You can help keep them out by looking for and reporting these plants.

**What does a Weed Watcher Do?**

1. Learn the weeds
2. Look for weeds.
3. Document weeds
4. Report weeds.

For more information about becoming a Weed Watcher Volunteer  
Contact Lancaster County Weed Control: 402-441-7817  
[weeds@lancaster.ne.gov](mailto:weeds@lancaster.ne.gov) <http://lancaster.ne.gov/weeds>

Our “NEW” Weed Watcher Program in Lancaster County is designed to train and support volunteers to find and report new occurrences of harmful invasive plants. Weed Watchers help protect natural areas from the impacts of invasive plants by detecting new populations early before they get out of hand.

Preventing a plant from invading in the first place is more efficient, less ecologically damaging, and less strenuous than managing large plant infestations after they are already established.

A second and equally important goal of the Weed Watcher program is to build capacity for other organizations to initiate early detection programs by serving as a potential model and providing educational materials for use and adaptation. Invasive plant early detection programs can be as simple as informally training your staff or volunteers on weeds to watch for, or recruiting and training new volunteers to survey high priority weed-free sites. It can be very challenging and

rewarding to be the first to find new infestations of invasive plants that were previously not reported.

### **Education**

Outreach and education are a key component in organizing a successful program. Our staff will be available to train anyone wishing to join the Weed Watcher Program. The program includes a Weed Watcher Resource Guide, a photo calendar to help you identify invasive plants as they grow throughout the season, and a hit report to give you a way to report the infestation.

### **Who are the Weed Watchers?**

Weed Watchers are people who care about the health of our lands and want to help prevent the ecological and economic damage associated with plant invasions by looking for and reporting new weeds. Weed Watchers can be private citizens who simply want to scan for new invaders while they hike. Often Weed Watchers are people already actively volunteering as a Master Gardener or for their local UNL Extension. Public and private land owners such as the Nebraska Game & Parks, Natural Resource Districts, or Farm Service Agencies also have staff and volunteers who watch for weeds as they trek across their land. Outdoorsmen, hunters and fishermen, geocachers, 4-H groups, boy scouts and girl scouts, are just a few of the groups that can help make a difference.

### **What does a Weed Watcher do?**

*“Weed Watchers Trek to Protect”*

Weed Watching is as easy as one, two, three:

1. Learn the weeds.
2. Look for weeds.
3. Document and report weeds.

### **Interested?**

We need everyone's help, so if you would like to become part of the Weed Watcher program or you belong to a group that is interested in joining the program contact the Lancaster County Weed Control Office. Email: [weeds@lancaster.ne.gov](mailto:weeds@lancaster.ne.gov) or phone 402-441-7817.