



# Washington State Department of Agriculture

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## **Spartina treatments begin in June to eradicate remaining infestation**

**OLYMPIA** – The treatment season for the continued eradication of spartina, a noxious weed that can harm shellfish, begins June 1 and will continue through October, the [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) announced today.

The agency's efforts to eliminate this aggressive weed have been extremely effective over the past nine years with the infested area plummeting from a high of more than 9,000 acres in 2003 to an estimated five acres this year. Still, to continue that effort, nearly 30,000 sites around the region will need to be visited twice in the coming year to ensure the weed does not return in force.

"We have seen great success in combating this invasive species thanks to the cooperative effort of many partners," said Jim Marra, manager for WSDA's Pest Program. "But our efforts must continue if we are to protect our state's critical shoreline habitat."

Spartina, also called cordgrass, is an aggressive weed that severely disrupts the ecosystems of native saltwater estuaries in Washington. If left unchecked, spartina outcompetes native vegetation and converts ecologically productive mudflats into solid spartina meadows that destroy important migratory shorebird and waterfowl habitat, increase the threat of flooding and harm the state's shellfish industry.

Since 1995, WSDA has served as the lead state agency for spartina eradication, as detailed in annual [progress reports](#). WSDA facilitates the continued cooperation of local, state, federal and tribal governments; universities; interested groups; and private landowners.

WSDA and its partners plan to focus this year on Grays Harbor, Hood Canal, Willapa Bay, Puget Sound, the north and west sides of the Olympic Peninsula and the mouth of the Columbia River.

In 2013, project partners expect to survey more than 80,000 acres of saltwater estuaries and 1,000 miles of shoreline in 14 counties to determine the extent of spartina infestation. WSDA and others will dig out small infestations and treat larger sites with the herbicides glyphosate and imazapyr.

The goal is to discover any new infestations and prevent spartina from returning to areas where the weed has already been eradicated.

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