



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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For immediate release: April 19, 2016 (16-10)

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Season to treat invasive spartina starts in May

OLYMPIA – This year’s treatment season for spartina, an aggressive noxious weed, starts May 1 and will continue through November, the [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) announced today. Survey and eradication efforts will take place in multiple areas, including Grays Harbor, Hood Canal, Willapa Bay, Puget Sound, the north and west sides of the Olympic Peninsula and at the mouth of the Columbia River.

Spartina, commonly known as cordgrass, 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. The invasive species destroys important migratory shorebird and waterfowl habitat, increases the threat of flooding and negatively impacts the state’s shellfish industry.

Spartina eradication has been extremely effective over the past 13 years with the state’s infested areas plummeting from a high of more than 9,000 acres in 2003 to an estimated nine acres this year.

Since 1995, WSDA has served as the lead state agency for [spartina eradication](#), facilitating the cooperation of local, state, federal and tribal governments; universities; interested groups; and private landowners. These cooperators last year located and treated about 30,000 discrete finds of spartina plants.

This year, project partners expect to survey more than 80,000 acres of saltwater estuaries and 1,000 miles of shoreline in 12 counties. WSDA and its partners will dig out small infestations or treat larger sites with the herbicides glyphosate and imazapyr.

“Our goal is to find new infestations and prevent spartina from returning to cleared areas,” said Jim Marra, manager of WSDA’s Pest Program. “Our efforts have saved some of the state’s most productive shoreline habitat. Because of our success in combating this invasive species, we have shifted from large-scale eradication efforts to the detailed work of detection and targeted spartina plant removal.”

Go to www.agr.wa.gov/plantsinsects/weeds/Spartina to see progress reports on spartina control efforts.

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