

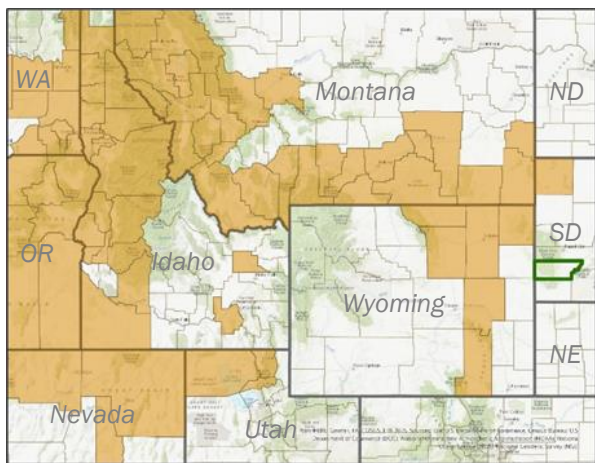
Weed & Pest Newsletter

Landowners: Be on the Lookout for Ventenata on Your Property

Ventenata is an invasive cool-season annual grass that typically germinates in the fall, overwinters as a seedling, and matures by late spring / early summer. Native to portions of Africa, Europe, and Asia, it was introduced into the Pacific Northwest in the 1950s. It has since spread eastward into Wyoming and Montana and has recently been detected in Crook County, Wyoming and in Harding County, South Dakota.

Ventenata is problematic for several key reasons:

- **Reduced forage availability:** It outcompetes native and desirable perennial grasses, reducing usable forage by up to **70%**. Its wiry texture and high silica content make it unpalatable, causing livestock and wildlife to avoid infested areas.
- **Increased wildfire risk:** Like cheatgrass, ventenata dries out early, creating fine fuels that can intensify wildfire behavior.
- **Rapid spread:** Each plant can produce 15–35 seeds, allowing it to quickly invade rangelands, hay fields, pastures, sagebrush areas, and pine woodlands.
- **High control costs:** Neighboring states have invested significant resources attempting to manage and contain infestations.



Distribution of ventenata in nearby western states (counties in tan have ventenata). Custer County, SD is outlined in bold green

How to Identify Ventenata

Look for these distinguishing traits:

- Dark red to black stem nodes • Long, membranous ligule • Narrow, folded leaves • Open, airy seed head with bent or twisted awns • Bright green in early spring, turning shiny blonde by mid-summer • Shallow roots (plants pull easily) • Typically 6–18 inches tall, with some reaching up to 30 inches.

Early detection is critical. Monitor your property, especially in mid-summer, when ventenata is most visible as a light tan-colored grass. Use caution when purchasing hay from counties where ventenata is known to occur (see map on left), as seed contamination can occur unknowingly.

If you believe you have found ventenata on your property, please contact the County Weed and Pest Office promptly. Early action can help prevent further spread and protect our lands.



Above ventenata photos by Tim Prather, University of Idaho.



Ventenata seed heads (above, photo by Matt Lavin, Bozeman, Montana). Small patches of ventenata (left) that have turned a light blonde color in mid-summer (photo taken in Harding County, SD by Steven Ripple, US Forest Service).

Need an applicator?

We keep a list of commercial applicators working in the Black Hills area. We do not make recommendations and only provide the list as a service to county residents. If you are a commercial applicator and not on our list, please let us know.



Limited cost-share funding available to Custer County landowners!

The Custer County Weed and Pest Department is offering a 50-50 cost share on herbicide costs for noxious weed control within the county. Funding is limited and conditions apply. Note: **not** all herbicides qualify for the cost-share. Exclusions include lawn care herbicides, dicamba, glyphosates (ex. Roundup) and other bare-ground products, pre-emergents, and chemicals labeled for crops only. For a complete list of conditions/restrictions, please contact the office or review the cost-share form. The form is available in the office and on the County Weed and Pest webpage. Itemized receipts accepted until October 31 or when funding runs out.

Share Your Email Address

Help us save printing and mailing costs by sharing your email address with us. Send an email to WeedControl@custercountysd.com.



STATE NOXIOUS WEEDS

Canada Thistle

Cirsium arvense



Absinth wormwood

Artemisia absinthium



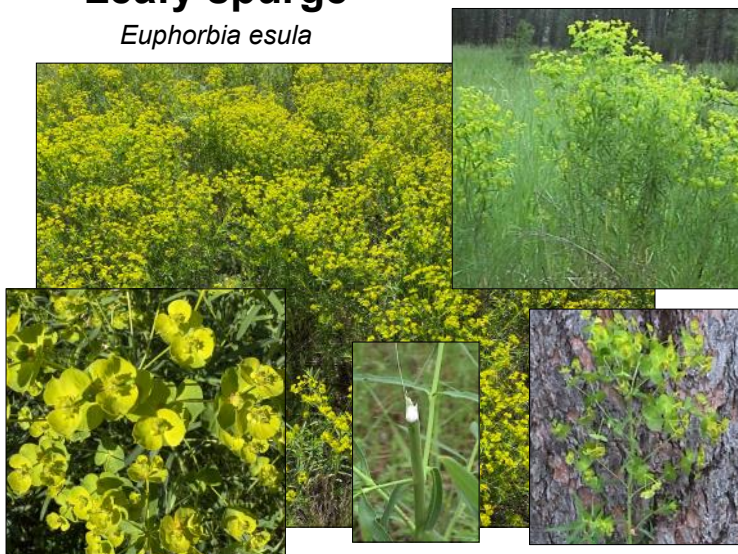
Perennial sowthistle

Sonchus arvensis



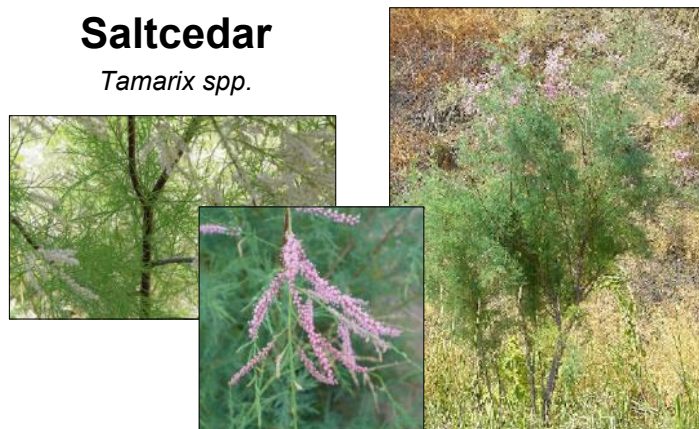
Leafy spurge

Euphorbia esula



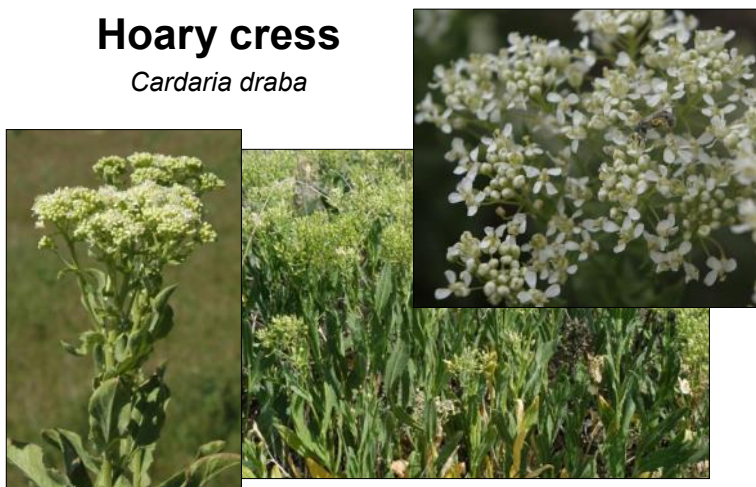
Saltcedar

Tamarix spp.



Hoary cress

Cardaria draba



Purple loosestrife

Lythrum salicaria



OTHER NOXIOUS WEEDS - see Weed & Pest website for more information



LOCALLY LISTED NOXIOUS WEEDS

Black henbane

Hyoscyamus niger



Plumeless Thistle

Carduus acanthoides



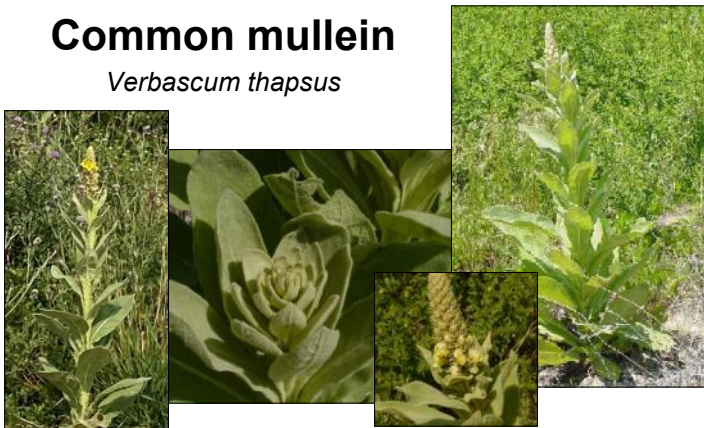
Spotted knapweed

Centaurea maculosa



Common mullein

Verbascum thapsus



St. Johnswort

Hypericum perforatum



Houndstongue

Cynoglossum officinale



White horehound

Marrubium vulgare L.



Musk Thistle

Carduus nutans



Yellow toadflax

Linaria vulgaris





Weed and Pest Department
25363 US Hwy 385
Custer, SD 57730
605-673-5680

WeedControl@custercountysd.com
www.custercountysd.com/weed-and-pest-control/

NOTICE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTROL NOXIOUS WEEDS AND DECLARED PESTS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN this 18th day of March, 2026 pursuant to SDCL 38-22 as amended to all owners, occupants, agents, and public officials in charge of lands in Custer County, South Dakota, that they are responsible for the suppression, control, and eradication of noxious weeds and declared pests infestations that may exist on such lands.

Chemical, biological, and / or cultural control methods used for the suppression, control, and eradication of noxious weed and declared pest infestations shall be those approved for such purposes by the Custer County Weed and Pest Supervisor, Agronomy Weed Field Specialist, or the South Dakota State University Experiment Station.

Upon failure to observe this notice, the county weed and pest board is required to proceed pursuant to the law and have the noxious weeds or declared pests destroyed by such methods as they may find necessary, the expense of which shall constitute a lien and be entered as a tax against the land, and be collected as other real estate taxes are collected, or by other means as provided by law.

Plant and animals designated as being noxious weeds and declared pests in the state of South Dakota are Absinth Wormwood, Canada Thistle, Hoary Cress, Leafy Spurge, Perennial Sow Thistle, Purple Loosestrife, Salt Cedar, and Gypsy Moth.

In addition, Black Henbane, Common Mullein, Houndstongue, Musk & Plumeless Thistles, Spotted Knapweed, St. Johnswort, White Horehound, and Yellow Toadflax have been approved by the South Dakota Weed and Pest Control Commission as locally noxious weeds are subject to the same suppression, control, and eradication requirements as the before mentioned plants and animals.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that upon establishing probable cause to believe a noxious weed or declared pest infestation exists upon any property in Custer County, a representative of the Custer County Weed and Pest Control board will enter upon said property for the purpose of inspecting and confirming that such infestation actually exists .

Custer County Weed and Pest Board