



Hornby Island Residents' and Ratepayers' Association (HIRRA)

4305 Central Road, Hornby Island, BC, V0R 1Z0
Ph: (250) 335-1842 E-mail: office@hirra.ca

THE HIRRA WEED COMMITTEE:

The HIRRA Invasive Weed Control Committee receives a small yearly grant and hires local workers to remove invasive plants, particularly Spurge Laurel Daphne and Scotch Broom. More willing volunteers and financial donations are welcome to help with this important work.

Invasive plants (also known as noxious weeds) are non-native plants that are competitive and difficult to control. Hornby Island's diverse and rare ecosystems support many endangered species who depend on these unique habitats for their survival and are easily overwhelmed by invasive weeds.

THE BYLAW: Homeowners or occupants on Hornby are responsible for keeping their property clear from noxious weeds (Comox Valley Regional District Bylaw #2347 details can be found on the CVRD web-site: www.comoxvalleyrd.ca).

Three ways to control the spread of invasive plants:

1. Use the best method for the site and species (e.g. pulling, digging, cutting).
2. Remove dead flowers, seedpods and berries of invasive plants to reduce seed spread by birds, wildlife, pets and people.
3. Use proper methods to dispose of invasive plant parts and seeds responsibly (not just over the fence).

THE WEEDS:

SPURGE LAUREL DAPHNE: This invasive Daphne (*Daphne laureola*) is an evergreen plant up to 1.5m (5ft) with dark green shiny leaves in a whorl pattern. The small cream flowers appear in February and seeds mature by June. The seeds are poisonous to humans, but birds love them and readily spread them to new sites. Daphne has a toxic sap that can cause skin irritation. Always wear gloves and long sleeves when handling plants.

Small plants can be pulled. Larger plants can be killed by cutting them right at ground level and dabbing the cut with a "VSS" solution of 4 parts Vinegar (7%), ¼ part table Salt and ¼ part liquid dish soap. Dry weather is necessary when using the VSS solution. The cut stems can be left on the ground or moved to a less conspicuous spot (but not the compost) as they will break down in a year's time. DO NOT burn them or move them in an enclosed vehicle.

Seedlings will sprout the following year and will produce seeds on their third year. To prevent young Daphne going to seed, it is best to do regular site visits and removal all plants at least every two years.

For any questions or advice on Daphne please call Anna Zielinski: 250 335-0988

SCOTCH BROOM: Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) is an opportunistic plant, especially in open or disturbed ground and will quickly fill in open areas, forming

dense stands and choking out native plants. It is drought and cold tolerant, and like Daphne will build up a long-lived “seed bank” in the soil. Scotch Broom is an upright deciduous shrub, up to 3m (10ft) in height, with small leaves and bright yellow flowers and poisonous pea-like seeds.

Scotch Broom is optimally removed when focused on blooming and seed production, from February to mid-May, but not yet with mature seed pods. If the soil is moist and the stems are finger width or smaller, broom plants can be pulled easily from the ground by hand. Larger plants should be cut below the root crown using loppers or a pruning saw. When removing Scotch Broom, avoid disturbing the soil as that can stimulate dormant Broom seeds to sprout. Broom can be pulled or cut any time if the area is revisited before blooming, as long as the soil is moist when pulling.

ENGLISH HOLLY: Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) is a popular ornamental tree that out-competes native vegetation for light, nutrients and water. It spreads through suckering from the roots and sprouting where branches touch the ground. The bright red berries are toxic to humans, but are readily spread by birds. Holly is a particular concern in Hornby’s Provincial and Regional Parks where it can proliferate and spread un-noticed in the forest.

Young Holly plants can look similar to native Oregon-grape, which has yellow flowers, blue berries, and somewhat duller leaves. Unlike Holly leaves, Oregon-grape leaves grow opposite to one another. Ideally, Holly should be removed while it is still young and not yet producing berries. Pull young plants from moist soil, or cut them if soil is dry. Remove mature trees and saplings by cutting them below the root crown. Avoid soil disturbance. If it cannot be cut below the root crown, cut at about 1m (3ft) and remove all branches, leaving a bare stick which is easier to keep re-sprouting growth removed from.

OTHERS: Some of the other opportunistic species that are spreading on Hornby include: Japanese Knotweed, English Ivy, Tansy, Thistles, Himalayan Blackberries, Yellow Flag Iris, Saint John’s Wort, Periwinkle, Convolvulus Bindweed and some marine plants.

WATCH OUT FOR GIANT HOGWEED: (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) Giant Hogweed is a **severe human health hazard**. It has been found on Hornby and removed, and should be reported if seen. Sap from the stalks and stem can cause severe burns, scarring and blindness. It is best to have a professional remove this plant. Do not handle without proper protective equipment.

Hogweed is very tall plant up to 6m (20ft) with leaves as much as 1.5m (6ft) across. The leaves have stiff hairs on the underside and are compound and deeply cut. Stems are hollow with dark red-purple blotches. White umbrella-like flowers appear in late summer.

MORE INFORMATION:

Coastal Invasive Species Committee: <http://coastalisc.com/>

Invasive Species Council of BC: <https://bcinvasives.ca/>

Provincial Report-a-Weed hotline www.reportaweed.ca / 1-888-WEEDSBC