



News Release

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Puncturevine Alert Issued by Regional District

Kelowna's spiny alien invader has returned. Puncturevine is an alien invasive plant, and is germinating early this season and thriving due to the above average temperatures and extended periods of moisture this spring. The Regional District is asking residents to learn to identify the plant and to control it.

Bylaw Enforcement Officer Rhoda Mueller says, "Puncturevine was imported to our country. It doesn't have any natural enemies to control its spread. Therefore it's up to humans to try and control this noxious weed."

Mueller adds the puncturevine prefers areas of disturbed, bare ground and rapidly forms dense mats along road shoulders, vacant lots and beaches. Its stems grow up to 10 feet (3 metres) few weeks later. The sharp spines on the seedpods are arranged at different angles so that no along the ground. Tiny yellow flowers appear early-mid summer, and spiny seedpods emerge a matter how the seed falls, at least one spine points upwards to meet an unwary foot, paw or tire. Not only can the spines adhere to skin, shoes, clothing or animals, they can even puncture bicycle and wheelbarrow tires.

Puncturevine was imported to North America from Mediterranean regions of Europe and North Africa several decades ago. It is found throughout the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys, but is not known to occur elsewhere in the province. It is most prolific in the sandy soils around Oliver, Osoyoos and Keremeos, with isolated patches in Penticton. Kelowna's first known infestation of Puncturevine was reported in 2004. Seeds were likely brought to the Kelowna site by people or equipment and may have been transported to other locations before it was reported.

Learn more about puncturevine and how to control it as well as other weeds by visiting www.weedsbc.ca or from the Noxious Weed Control page of the Regional District website (www.regionaldistrict.com).

Let's keep puncturevine out of the Central Okanagan. The spiny seeds are great hitchhikers, we don't want to be stepping on these spiny alien invaders in our backyards, beaches and parks! To report a puncturevine infestation, contact Rhoda Mueller at 250-469-6218 or rhodam@cord.bc.ca. You will be entered to win one of six \$50 gift certifications from a local garden center (2005).

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Contact:

Rhoda Mueller
Regional Weed Control Officer
469-6218

