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Got Weeds?

Arapahoe County offers free bugs to fight off pesky weeds

Arapahoe County is offering free bugs in the battle against leafy spurge and diffuse knapweed - pesky weeds that are hard to control.

The County's Weed Control Office is offering two types of bugs – Flea Beetles for leafy spurge and Seed Head Weevils for diffuse knapweed – to residents with sizeable amounts (at least a quarter of an acre) of leafy spurge and diffuse knapweed on their property.

Both insects have proven to be effective at controlling both types of weeds, often providing better long-term results than traditional herbicides. The County has seen dramatic results with the Seed Head Weevil since it began using it in 1998, and has seen the same results with the Flea Beetle program that began in 1999.

The bugs offer an environmentally safer form of weed control, and are self sustaining with little need for maintenance. They also are safe to release around desirable plants and crops because both bugs specifically eat leafy spurge or diffuse knapweed.

Flea Beetles eat leafy spurge and kill it by depleting the root, leaving it susceptible to diseases and other forms of stress. The Seed Head Weevil is effective at reducing the amount of seed produced by diffuse knapweeds, and the adults feed on the leaves.

Since 1999, dozens of landowners and local communities have participated in the County's Flea Beetle and Seed Head Weevil program, and the results are successful. Before and after photos of several Flea Beetle sites are available on our web site at www.co.arapahoe.co.us. To view the sites, click on services and weed control.

If you have a sizable amount of leafy spurge and would like to participate in this program, please contact Russell Johnson by June 15. Insects are available on a first-come, first-serve basis at no cost to Arapahoe County property owners. Property owners outside of Arapahoe County may request insects, but priority will be given to Arapahoe County residents. If you are interested in receiving these insects, or unsure if you should request them, contact Weed Control Specialist Russell Johnson at 720-874-6713 or by e-mail at rjohnson@co.arapahoe.co.us.

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