



## OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### REDUCE TUMBLEWEEDS THROUGH MANAGEMENT OF KOCHIA, RUSSIAN THISTLE



WELD COUNTY, CO — It's a scene that repeats itself every year. Tumbleweeds blow throughout Weld County clogging irrigation ditches and fence lines. In some cases, they can be so severe they temporarily close county roads, as evidenced this past April when they overtook a portion of Weld County Road 53 southeast of Kersey and northwest of Keenesburg, effectively closing the road for three days.

To reduce the nuisance tumbleweeds create, Weld County Government is reminding residents that they have the ability to stop tumbleweeds before they start by taking some simple steps to manage the growth of Kochia and Russian Thistle on their property.

"We've repeatedly seen tumbleweeds create a hinderance, and many start as dead Kochia" said Weld County Commissioner Kevin Ross. "We encourage residents to do what they can to limit the growth of these weeds. By doing so, hopefully tumbleweeds won't be as big of an issue in the fall."

It's not just a few trouble areas that are concerning. Rather, it's the Kochia and Russian Thistle that dots thousands of acres countywide, typically forming large biomass clusters near buildings, fences, on non-productive ground or near other areas of disturbance. To best manage Kochia and Russian Thistle growth and prevent the weeds from forming tumbleweeds, Weld County Weed Division Supervisor Tina Booton recommends:

**Mowing and mulching to a manageable height** – When mowing is conducted prior to flowering, it has been shown to reduce the likelihood of biomass clusters reforming by 33% compared to a non-mowed site. Mowing can also reduce seed density in an area by 98%, if it is completed prior to flowering. However, mowing a little later in the season can lessen the chances of having to mow more than once and reduce the size of biomass clusters.

**Planting native grasses and other desirable vegetation** – Doing so may limit the opportunity for Kochia seed to establish and form new plants.

**Chemical application** – Although it may be too late for chemical application this year, it is most effective when used in the early growing stages of Kochia and Russian Thistle, usually in the spring and summer.

Booton realizes no two situations are alike. She said the Weed Division is always willing to help landowners identify their issue and develop a treatment plan. She just asks that they take the first step to address the issue.

"Controlling Kochia and Russian Thistle is mutually beneficial. Not only does it reduce the likelihood of tumbleweeds forming, but it also enables the land to be used as intended without being invaded by these plants. We're happy to help people develop the best management strategy, we just ask they make managing Kochia and Russian Thistle a priority," Booton said.

[Read more about Kochia Weed and Russian Thistle control options.](#) Contact the Weed Division at (970) 400-3770 or at [www.weldweeds.org](http://www.weldweeds.org).

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