



## Ada County Weed Control - Biological Control

Biological weed control uses natural predators to eliminate or weaken noxious weed infestations. Ada County strives to find the most ecologically friendly methods of controlling noxious weeds on public lands, and several bio-control agents have proven successful. Bio-control agents like beetles, flies, midges or worms are most effective on established noxious weed infestations rather than new, smaller infestations commonly found on private property. Essentially we use natural systems of ecology to restore balance to plants found on public lands in Ada County. These bio-control agents are safe to the environment and are a natural way to protect our public lands against invasive weed species.

Biological control is not expected to completely eradicate a weed, since the bugs *need* that specific plant to survive. However, incorporating bio-control agents into an integrated weed management plan is an effective and important weed control tool.



Canada Thistle  
defoliating beetle

Ada County  
Weed, Pest & Mosquito Abatement

975 E. Pine Avenue  
Meridian, ID 83642



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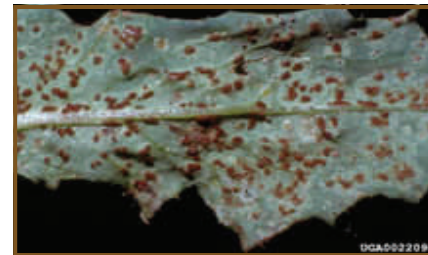


Ada County  
Weed, Pest & Mosquito Abatement

# Biological Weed Control

## TYPES OF BIOLOGICAL CONTROL:

- In the Boise and Eagle foothills, Ada County Weed Control has released three biological agents for the control of Rush Skeletonweed: a rust spore that attacks the stems, a midge that attacks the stems, and a mite that attacks the seed head.
- Ada County Weed Control regularly collects, releases, and monitors a leaf-eating beetle that attacks Purple Loosestrife. This plant is difficult to control because it drops its seeds into area waterways. Purple Loosestrife seeds can spread long distances in our waterways, which makes spraying herbicides an unattractive alternative. The beetles eat the leaves and also reduce seed production.
- Spotted and Diffuse Knapweeds are being targeted for the release of the Lesser Knapweed Flower Weevil (*Larinus minutus*). This weevil is a new find in Ada County and is the result of previous releases in other areas. Now that we have found this bio-agent in our county, we are attempting to foster its population numbers and diversify its spread.



From top to bottom:  
Spotted Knapweed Flower Weevil  
Purple Loosestrife defoliating beetle  
Rusk Skeletonweed Rust Spore

## PARTNERS:

Ada County works with state and federal agencies in researching and releasing biological control agents on public lands to control noxious weed infestations. There are approximately 50 different species of bio-control agents released to weed infestations across Idaho. These agents are selected by a team of experts (from botanists to land management experts) who research the target plant's native habitat and determine the safest and most effective agents to introduce as biological control. This process can take several years to complete, ensuring the bio-control agents will not harm Idaho's ecosystem. Out of the 64 state-identified noxious weeds found in Ada County, 9 species have approved, established and effective biological control agents.



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