

SAVING UTAH'S LANDSCAPE WEBER COUNTY BAG O' WOAD PROGRAM



Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

Dyer's Woad *Isatis tinctoria L.*



Dyer's woad is a biennial plant that grows from 1-4 feet tall. It begins as a rosette of hairy, bluish-green leaves in the first year. Stems grow from the middle of the rosette, with stem leaves that are lance-shaped and alternate with a cream-colored mid-rib. Yellow flowers with four petals appear in small clusters at the top of the stems in spring to early summer. Seed pods are flattened, and hang from short stalks at the ends of stems. Its preferred habitat is poor, dry soil.



Thanks to the Bag O' Woad program, kids in Weber, Box Elder and Morgan counties see green when they spot the bright yellow flowers of dyer's woad on their hillsides. That's because for the past three years, they have been improving the environment and receiving cash to pull and bag this invasive weed.

The Bag O' Woad Program is an effort to educate youth, and through them their parents, about the impacts weeds have on their communities. They learn that everyone can take some responsibility to control noxious weeds.

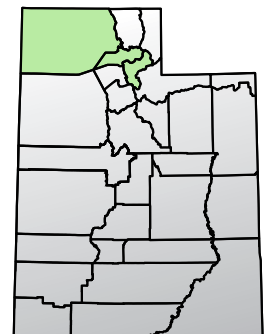
Weber County's Bag O' Woad program, one of several throughout the state, offers a \$10 bounty for each 40-pound bag of dyer's woad, brought in. Youth are limited to two bags each and are required to have two inches of root on the plants. Work groups are required to have one adult for each ten children.

LaMar DeFries, chairman of the Weber Conservation District, has led the Bag O' Woad program for the past three years. The program is a cooperative effort of the conservation district and Utah State University Extension Service. In Weber County, funding has been provided by a Grazing Improvement Program grant from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Weber Conservation District, Weber County, Farm Bureau, USDA Forest Service and numerous cities. The large orange bags that are used in the program have been donated by the Utah Department of Transportation.

During 2008, Weber County awarded \$12,235 to youth bringing in bags of dyer's woad. This represents the efforts of 746 individuals and a total of 22.5 tons of dyer's woad that was harvested. The participants are asked to provide the location of the infestation where they pulled dyer's woad. This information is used to show community leaders the level of participation that is taking place in their areas.

The program operates each Thursday in May, when kids can pick up empty bags and return filled ones. Farmers have volunteered to haul the tons of weeds to the county's transfer station.

The program has received some press notice in local newspapers and two television news shows. Local weed specialists say even though the project may not have stopped the spread of woad, it has slowed it down and educated the kids.



WEBER COUNTY BAG O' WOAD PROGRAM



Workers load bags of woad harvested by kids in Weber County (left). Woad warriors pose by their bags of woad (above). Kids are dwarfed by the infestation of dyer's woad they are harvesting (below). Photos courtesy of James Barnhill, USU Extension.

Steps to Success:

- Everyone has been willing to work hard together for the success of the project.
- The program has a champion in LaMar DeFries.
- The Utah Association of Conservation Districts and USU Extension Service have reported annually to the Weber Council of Governments.
- The group seeks funding annually from government sources and the Farm Bureau.
- The UACD and USU Extension Service have shared the management and clerical work associated with the program.



Partners

- Weber Conservation District
 - Weber County
- USU Extension Service in Weber County
 - Utah Farm Bureau
 - Private Individuals
 - Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
 - USDA Forest Service
- Weber Council of Government Members
 - Utah Department of Transportation