



PARKS AND
RECREATION

Adopt the Greenbelt News

A newsletter for participants of the Adopt the Greenbelt program.

April, 2021

Participate in Boise's First City Nature Challenge

The [City Nature Challenge](#) is an international effort for people to find and document plants and wildlife in cities across the globe. Join the local effort by collecting and uploading photos of the wonderful diversity of wild things in our community by participating in the **2021 Boise Area City Nature Challenge** starting April 30. Check out [Boise's iNaturalist page](#) or register to collect data along your greenbelt section [here](#).

FOCUS ON NATIVE PLANTS - Golden Currant



Golden currant (*Ribes aureum*) is a deciduous shrub that reaches heights of 3-9 feet and a spread of 2-6 feet. The branches are multi-stemmed, spineless, and arching with gray to red-brown bark, with bright green glossy leaves. Blooming in April-May, golden currants feature vivid yellow, tubular flowers that form clusters and have a spicy, clove-like aroma. The flowers produce berries that ripen to a

dark purple color in mid to late summer. The berries are edible, though very seedy, and can be used for making jams, jellies and pies. You can find golden currants growing along the shady sections of the Greenbelt corridor, providing habitat and food for songbirds, chipmunks, ground squirrels, and other wildlife.

WEED WATCH - Keep an Eye Out for These Biennial Weeds

Biennial weeds take two years to complete their life cycle. In the first year, they remain in a vegetative state, growing low to the ground and in the form of a rosette. In the second year, a stem will emerge from the rosette which will flower and set seed. Biennial weeds spread only by seed, so removing the rosettes early before it bolts is key to good maintenance.

Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) - Leaves are triangular, finely divided, and have a fern-like shape making it often mistaken for wild carrot. **Poison hemlock contains highly toxic alkaloids that are poisonous if ingested and may cause dermatitis. Please notify us of any sightings of poison hemlock.**



Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) - Leaves are lance-shaped, deeply-lobed, and with spikes at the lobe tips. There are coarse hairs on the leaf tops, making the leaf feel rough to the touch, and wooly hairs on the underside.

Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) - Rosettes can grow up to 2 feet in diameter with large spiny leaves that are densely covered with fine, dense hairs that give it a grayish appearance.



Houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) - Rosette is composed of long, rough, hairy, tongue-shaped leaves.



Bumblebees

Spring is officially here and with it comes the blooms and the bees! Not to be confused with the nonnative honeybees (*Apis* spp.) that tend to steal the spotlight, bumble bees (*Bombus* spp.) deserve a shout out for their important work they do in pollinating our native plants and agricultural crops. Unlike honey bees, bumble bees don't overwinter in hives or make honey. Instead, the queen toughs out the cold winters underground and alone, emerging in the spring to begin gathering pollen and reproducing. Throughout the summer, the queen builds her colony while remaining in the nest and produces female worker bees to do her bidding. As the season progresses, new queens and males are produced who will leave the nest to go on and mate elsewhere and establish new colonies. Idaho, Washington, and Oregon are home to nearly 30 species of these docile and fuzzy beneficial insects, but unfortunately many of these species are experiencing population decline due to loss of habitat.