

Disturbed ground provides a good seedbed for noxious weeds. Landowners are strongly encouraged to look for potential noxious weed infestations. If uncertain about whether a plant is a noxious weed, take a sample to a local county weed and pest control district office or a local University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) office for identification. If a noxious weed, various weed control strategies can be used that won't harm the planting.

For weed identification, see www.uwyo.edu/CES/WYOWEED/wyoweed.htm. For lists of noxious weeds, see <http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver> and click on Wyoming under State Noxious Weed Reports.

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Seed available to reseed critical burned areas

The Natrona County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) has a limited amount of emergency funding to help landowners reseed burned areas determined critical to reduce the impact on the water quality of streams flowing off Casper Mountain.

The program is offered with financial assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program.

The critical areas include burned areas adjacent to drainage bottoms and fire lines with direct connections to stream courses. This program will provide free a native grass and sterile cover crop seed mixture to reseed critical areas.

Also available for loan will be hand tools and hand-seeding equipment. Those interested should contact Stewart Anderson, CERT team leader, at (307) 235-9205 for more information.

Where to get seed?

Landowners may want to reseed some areas of their property in the burned area of the Jackson Canyon Fire or where heavy machinery cut a fire line across their property.

Using a seed mix appropriate for soils in your area that also meets rehabilitation needs is important. A local feed store may have the seed and should be a first stop; however, if not, there are several Rocky Mountain seed companies that specialize in native and non-native grass and forb species.

Here is a list of those seed companies. Listing these seed companies does not imply preference; simply, they often have the seeds that fit Casper-area conditions.

Sharp Bros. Seed Co.
Greeley, Colorado (800) 421-4234
www.sharpseed.com/

Granite Seed
Lehi, Utah (801) 768-4422
<http://www.graniteseed.com/Index.aspx>

Wind River Seed, Inc.
Manderson, Wyoming (307) 568-3361
www.windriverseed.com

Pawnee Buttes Seed, Inc.
Greeley, Colorado (800) 782-5947
www.pawneebuttesseed.com

Arkansas Valley Seed Solutions
Denver, Colorado (877) 957-3337
www.avseeds.com

Canned food precautions can keep you safe after fire

Are you concerned about the canned foods in a home or storage area affected by a fire? Are they safe? Can I use them?

Clean-up after a disaster is never easy. Confusion regarding safety makes the process even harder.

Discard any food in cans or jars that have been near a fire. The heat can activate food spoilage bacteria. Extreme heat can split or rupture the can or jar, rendering the food unsafe. If the jars or cans have been exposed to fire-fighting chemicals but no heat, they can be decontaminated the same as cookware (see below). Wash and sanitize them, discard the old label, and put on a new label with the name of the product and expiration date (if applicable).

Discard food in permeable packaging, like cardboard, plastic wrap, screw-topped jars, and bottles that have been stored outside a refrigerator. They have been exposed to fire retardant and/or toxic fumes released from burning materials. Foods stored in refrigerators and freezers may also be contaminated by fumes. The seals are not airtight.

What about cookware? Wash pots and pans exposed to fire-fighting chemicals thoroughly in

soapy, hot water, and rinse in clean, hot water. Submerge cookware for 15 minutes in a sanitizing solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water.

If food has been near a fire, discard it. If it develops an off-odor or flavor, throw it out. This is a sign of spoilage.

For additional information on food safety, contact a county extension service office, consumer health specialist, environmental health office, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat and Poultry Hotline at (800) 535-4555. If in doubt as to whether food is safe, throw it out!

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