

Some, including the media, could deepen their bastard cabbage research just a little.

The seeds of bastard cabbage are NOT very small like rye grass. As far as seeds go, they are actually quite large and round ... they fit in the exact same size hole as wheat and cereal rye GRAIN on a seed cleaner. TXDOT uses these very low priced cereal grains as an economical, cool season, temporary vegetation for erosion control on fall/winter-seeded roadside construction projects. It is specified in the TXDOT Standards for all 254 counties. They used it last fall to stabilize areas impacted by the Bastrop Fires, for example.

Some cereal grain seeds that come into the lowest-priced-ends of the market may have never been through a seed cleaner. Many farmers trade, buy, and sell "combine-run" seeds, straight out of their harvesting machinery. The age-old tradition to save your own seed is a good thing, especially in this day of global trading and genetically modified organisms. But many a contaminated wheat field exists in the blacklands and beyond. And it's the lowest priced bid that state purchasing offices rank as the highest qualifying vendors. As long as TXDOT keeps funding the planting of contaminated cool season grains, we can expect more of this invasive weed into the future.

Bastard cabbage and TXDOT are not to be singled out as culprits. In the bigger picture, take a holistic look at your own landscape to see what's happening to our environment. There are many, many alien species to tackle... and many conduits for their expansion. All of us can improve the health of our lil' corner of the planet, one property at a time.

It is hard to say what the future will be, but one thing I know for certain is exactly why the Comanches fought so hard for this land. The Texas Hill Country is a treasure I don't want to lose.

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