



Willy Willy



The Weed Warrior



Wily Willy: Hi kids, I am Wily Willy the Weed Warrior. I am excited to be here to teach you all about weeds and how to become a weed warrior just like me. Do any of you know what a weed warrior is? (Give kids a chance to reply and if there are no hands then call on a few) Those are all great ideas. A Weed Warrior is someone who protects our ecosystems from being taken over by noxious weeds.

We need to know what an ECOSYSTEM is if we are going to protect them from noxious weeds. Do any of you know what it means? (Kids respond) Terrific you kids have all kinds of great ideas. I just happened to bring a picture of an ecosystem along with me. So kids do you know which parts of this picture is a part of an ecosystem? (kids respond) Your right, all of the living and non-living parts of this picture help to make up this ecosystem. The cool part about an ecosystem is how all of these separate parts become one ecosystem by working together and depending upon each other. Another important part to remember about an ecosystem is that if you take just one little thing out of that ecosystem you can upset and even destroy an ecosystem.

Do you kids suppose a farm, or an orchard is an ecosystem? (Kids respond) You are right they are, but they are not natural ecosystems. They have been changed, to provide food and shelter for all of us. We also change some natural ecosystems to help us live. How do you suppose we might change a natural ecosystem? (Kids respond) That's right, here are a few more ideas: Like when we cut trees from the forest to make our houses or when we put our cows in natural grasslands to eat and get healthy.

Now that we know what an ecosystem is, it is time to protect them from noxious weeds. Do any of you kids know what a noxious weed is? (kids respond) Noxious weeds are the bullies of the plant world.

These noxious weeds come from other ecosystems where there are bugs, animal and diseases that keep them from being too aggressive and pushy, but here in our ecosystem they don't have these natural enemies so they are really awful. They push our crops and other goods plants out of the way so that they can steal water and light and nutrients from them. These noxious weeds are worse than just normal weed, because they can harm our ecosystems, by disturbing our food chain. A noxious weed can take the place of grass that the deer eat.

Washington State has a law that lists all the noxious weeds and requires people that own land to get rid of noxious weeds there. Noxious weeds don't belong in our ecosystem and are outlaws. How do you suppose these outlaws got into our ecosystems? (kids respond) Most noxious weeds were brought here from other countries by early pioneers for things like medicines, food or because they had pretty flowers. Some noxious weeds seeds are made to stick to clothing and fur. They may have hitch hiked on the clothing of early pioneers or on their animal.

Oh no, kids! Here comes one of those tricky noxious weeds now!!

Noxious Weed:

**Weeds come in take the sun and stay.
Force all the good plants to go away.
When weeds grow big, they make lots of seeds,
They wreck the meadows where the animals feed.
Weeds steal all the water around
And make the good plants wither to the ground.
So, if you don't care about weeds today,
Weeds will always be here to stay.**

Wily Willy: So kids, what did you learn from the noxious weed rap? (Give the kids a chance to answer, and put up overhead or poster)

Wily Willy: You are right. The bad weeds can steal the water and destroy the meadows. They also hog all the sun and take the place of the food that wildlife eats.

So, do you want the noxious weeds to stay? NO, I don't either. That is why I am a Weed Warrior, but I need all of you to help.

Here is how you can be a Weed Warrior. A Weed Warrior has three main duties:

- number 1 patrol- you always have to be on the look out for those tricky weeds
 - number 2 search and destroy- when you do find those weeds, help to get rid of them, but before you do anything ask an adult to help you make sure that they are weeds and if it is safe to pull them
 - number 3 alert the troops and call for backup- if there are too many for you to pull by yourself ask some of your friends to help, or have an adult call your county weed board or the Forest Service for more information.
- Are you willing to do these duties?

All right then, everybody raise their hand and repeat the Weed Warrior pledge after me.

- 1. I will always be on weed patrol.**
- 2. I will search and destroy all known noxious weeds!**
- 3. I will alert the troop and call for back up if I need help!**

Very good boys and girls! I now pronounce you Official Weed Warriors! Weed Warriors have a song we sing to help us remember our vows. Are you kids ready to learn it?

Song: *We're the Weed Warriors and we're here to stay! (Marching motion)*
We're gonna make the bad weeds go away! “ ”
We will be on weed patrol, weed patrol, weed patrol. (searching motion)
We will search and destroy, and destroy, and destroy. (pulling motion)
We will call for backup, for backup, for backup. (Beckoning)
We're the Weed Warriors and we're here to stay. (March the rest of the song)
We're gonna make the bad weeds go away!

Go Weed Warriors!

Wily Willy: That was great kids, now I am have got to go, but before I do I am going to send in some folks to help you kids make a cool weed warrior shield like mine. Well, I'm off to battle with the weeds. In fact, I'll start with this one!

Remember your pledge, and good luck in winning the war against those bad weeds!