

Pretty flower stimulating bike tire repair business

By Jackie Green, Reno Gazette-Journal

The little yellow flowers that sprouted after our wet spring have few, if any, fans in Northern Nevada.

Bicyclist Bruce Ruana wants to send them to Iraq.

"It's a minefield" riding through them, he said.



Goathead flowers have a thorn that is flattening tires in the Sierra.

Walt Dorman, manager at Great Basin Bicycles in Reno, said they have caused a 200 percent increase in tire flats at his shop during the past few weeks.

"That beautiful little flower turns into that nasty goathead," said Bill Carlos, horticulturist for Washoe County.

Anyone who has biked or hiked in Northern Nevada or California has run into the goatheads, also called puncturevine, and found the thorns stuck in their dog's fur or in a flat bicycle tire.

“Why are there goatheads? What do they do?” Ruana, an avid cyclist and baseball/alpine ski manager at Scheels in Sparks, said in frustration.

Puncturevine is a summer annual with yellow flowers.

Each flower produces a spiky seed, so in each seed, there are five seedlets, “each of which seems to be capable of puncturing tires, getting through flip-flops, etc.” said Sue Donaldson of the University of Nevada, Reno Cooperative Extension.

From the time it starts growing, puncturevine will flower within a few weeks and keep flowering, producing seeds the entire time it is growing.

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