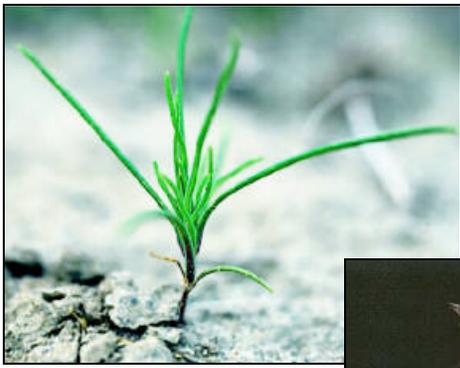
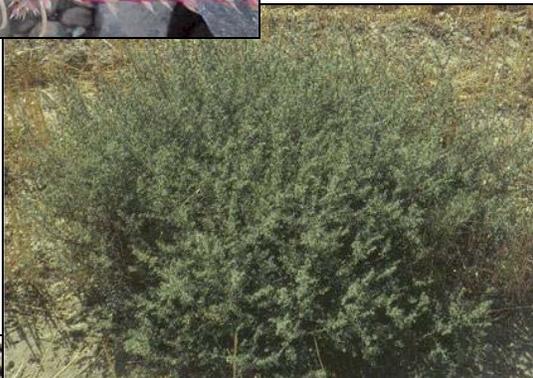
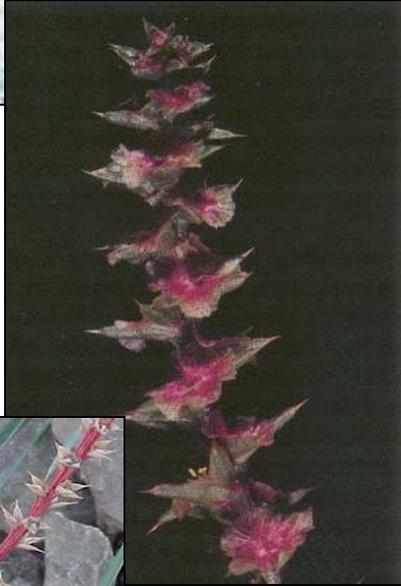


Russian Thistle



One plant
can produce
up to
200,000
seeds



Russian thistle is a summer annual in the goosefoot family that reproduces by seed. The seedlings look like pine tree seedlings; the first leaves are long and threadlike. As the plant matures, the leaves become progressively shorter and broader at the base and the sharp spines at the leaf tips become more noticeable. The last leaves look like scales with a sharp spine.

Russian thistle grows up to 3 feet tall with many branches and a rounded, tumbleweed shape. The roots can extend over 6 feet deep and 6 feet laterally.

Stems and branches often have red or purple stripes. Single flowers are borne in the leaf axil above a pair of small leaf-like spine-tipped bracts. The greenish to purplish flowers lack petals and are about ¼ inch across.

Russian thistle plants, which break from their roots after maturity, tumble with the wind, spreading seeds. Seed viability is rapidly lost in the soil; about 99% of the seed either germinates or decays in the soil during the first year. Control of Russian thistle in fencerows and waste areas will prevent a seed source that can infest cultivated fields, even though seed longevity is short, seed dissemination can quickly re-infest otherwise clean fields.

Control Measures:

Mechanical: Pull, hoe or cultivate to kill Russian thistle. Mowing or grazing will not kill the weed or stop seed production because new branches re-sprout from the stem.

Cultural: Crop competition, especially winter wheat, as well as established, perennial grasses help to suppress Russian thistle.

Chemical: Many Russian thistle plants in the Pacific Northwest are now resistant to herbicides in the sulfonylurea and triazine families. Rotate herbicides with different modes of action to help prevent resistance if it is not yet a problem.

In the seedling stage of growth, 2,4-D, Redeem or Curtail will provide adequate control. As it matures, consider using Tordon plus 2,4-D or a 3-way mix of 2,4-D, Dicamba and Escort.

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For Additional Information on Noxious Weeds, their Control and the State Weed Law, Visit our Website:

www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard

Read and follow all label instructions when applying herbicides. Trade names have been used to simplify instructions and no endorsement or warranty is expressed or implied.