

Puncturevine



Puncturevine is an annual, prostrate weed that grows from a simple, woody taproot. The plant produces numerous stems, up to six feet long, that are much branched and arise from the crown to produce a dense mat.

Also known as goathead, this weed spreads only from seeds that can remain dormant for 4 to 5 years. The leaves are opposite on the stem, hairy and divided into 4 to 8 pairs of leaflets. The small, yellow flowers have 5 petals that are formed at the leaf axils. At maturity, the fruit develops into a woody burr that has sharp, rigid spines that are strong enough to puncture bicycle tires and penetrate shoe soles.

Its prostrate growth and dense root system adapts Puncturevine for growth in many dry, waste-type areas. Generally, it is not a serious weed problem in established croplands.

Puncturevine injures the feet, hides, mouths, eyes and digestive tracts of livestock. This weed is usually not grazed, but if it is, the foliage of Puncturevine contains nitrate levels that are toxic enough to poison livestock.

Control Measures:

The best method of control for Puncturevine is to prevent the establishment of the weed by destroying the first plants found in an area before burs begin to form.

Mechanical: This weed is easily controlled by hoeing or shallow tillage when done prior to seed production. A new crop of seedlings will appear following a rain shower or irrigation so these methods will need to be repeated throughout the growing season.

Cultural: Crop competition, especially grass-type plants, will prevent the establishment of Puncturevine.

Chemical: 2,4-D can be effective when applied to the seedlings, but will require re-spraying throughout the growing season, before flowers appear.

Residual herbicides, such as Telar or Tordon can be applied in February or March to prevent seed germination in the spring or anytime during the growing season.

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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.

