

FC Noxious Weed Control Best Management Practices



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Spikeweed

Centromadia pungens

Class C Noxious Weed

Family: Asteraceae

Local Control

Background Information

Spikeweed is of the Asteraceae family. It may also be referred to as spiny tarweed. Spikeweed is a late season annual, native to dry grasslands of California's Central Valley and seasonally wet areas of that state's Central Valley. Introduction of spikeweed into southeastern Washington occurred within the last century. It is a prolific seed producer and agricultural pest in Franklin County, invading roadsides, field edges, moist waste areas, low alkaline sites, and rangeland. Spikeweed can grow to 3 feet or more depending on availability of moisture. It has rigid, freely branching stems giving the plant a sprawling appearance. Leaves and flowerhead bracts are spine-tipped. Large plants may produce over 100 flowerheads while smallest plants may produce just a few. Rosettes bolt in late spring, followed by yellow ray and disk flowers from June through September. Seeds fall near the parent plant, dispersed by wind or maintenance equipment.

Impacts

Spikeweed competes for moisture and nutrients with agricultural crops. Plants are spiny and form dense stands impeding movement of livestock, maintenance equipment and water. Livestock avoid grazing spikeweed. It establishes rapidly in environments favorable to its growth because of its high seed production. An infestation quickly forms an impenetrable barrier to livestock and wildlife.



Dense stand in Franklin County

Key Identifying Traits

- ◆ Basal leaves are yellowish-green, stiff, 2-6 inches in length with narrow lobes. Stem leaves are alternate, awl-like 1/2 inch long. On bolted plants leaves are typically spine-tipped.
- ◆ Freely branching stems are rigid, growing up to 3 feet or more.
- ◆ Leaves and stems have short hairs with glands that produce a strong-scented resin.
- ◆ Yellow flowers in summer. Flowerhead bracts are spine-tipped with short hairs.



Biology and Ecology

- ◆ Late season annual herb.
- ◆ Grows in moist or dry soils, exceeding 3 feet in favorable environments.
- ◆ Spreads by seeds.
- ◆ Yellow, ray and disk flowers occur at the tips of lateral branching stems.



Control Measures

Prevention: Preventing the establishment of populations through best management practices is the most cost effective method of control. Discontinue soil disturbance activities that can spread seed.

Biological: Plants are native to western U.S. so there are no biological controls available to manage spikeweed.

Cultural: Clean farm, maintenance and recreational equipment before moving from an infested area to an un-infested area. Promote desired vegetation to provide competition. Livestock may graze plants in early spring when plants are young and succulent.

Mechanical: On smaller patches hand-pulling spikeweed can be effective. The best timing for hand-pulling is early spring while the plant is still young and soft, before spines have hardened off. Gloves are recommended even at this early stage because more mature plants will have sharp spines. Mowing is not recommended as seeds can be spread or transported to new areas on equipment.

Chemical: Herbicides known to be effective on spikeweed are Perspective (Aminocyclopyrachlor and Chlorsulfuron) pre-emergence or early post emerge, and 2,4-D & Dicamba in rosette stage or active growth. Plants are covered with sticky glandular hairs that can tie up herbicide so add a surfactant.

ALWAYS FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS, THE LABEL IS THE LAW

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