

War on Weeds—Weeds are Everybody’s Problem

THE ISSUE: Bur buttercup

Bur buttercup (*Ceratocephala testiculata*) is low-growing annual native to Eurasia. It invades roadsides, poorly managed pastures and cultivated cropland. It can spread quickly providing competition to native and beneficial species. Once Bur buttercup is established it is extremely difficult to eradicate. It contains compounds that are toxic to livestock, including horses and sheep.



Photo courtesy of Bonnie Million, Bureau of Land Management, Bugwood.org

Bur buttercup typically only grows 1- 4 inches tall. It has simple stems that house antler or bird foot shaped leaves. Leaves are covered in very fine webby hairs. Flowers are small (about ¼ inch in diameter), bright yellow and have five petals. As blossoms mature and dry, they turn into burrs, which can be very aggravating. Seeds are easily transported by wind, water, shoes, animals and tires. Seeds germinate late in the fall to early in the spring, giving it an advantage over many other plants. when conditions are right it can complete its lifecycle in three weeks.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Options:

- Prevention — Learn to identify this weed. Always clean equipment, tires and clothing after leaving invested areas. Controlling Bur buttercup early is essential, as it can go to seed very quickly.
- Mechanical — Digging, hoeing and hand pulling are great options for small infestations. Bagging plant material is important as flowers may contain viable seed sooner than expected.
- Cultural — Establish healthy stands of beneficial vegetation that will compete with weed seedlings. Use grazing management practices that will encourage the growth of beneficial plants.
- Chemical — 2,4-D, Dicamba and Glyphosate are herbicide active ingredients that can provide good control of Bur buttercup. Ensure that the product that you intend to use is labeled for your intended site. **Always read and follow herbicide label directions!**

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