

War on Weeds – Weeds are Everybody’s Problem

THE ISSUE: Kochia

Kochia (*Kochia scoparia* L.) or (*Bassia Scoparia*) also known as Mexican burning bush, is a summer annual native to Eurasia. It was originally introduced into the U.S. in the 1900’s as an ornamental and certain strains have been grown as a forage crop. It invades roadsides, rangeland, pastures, cultivated fields, gardens, ditchbanks and other disturbed sites. Kochia is a prolific weed that can be found in every state in the U.S. except Alaska.



Photo courtesy of Howard F. Schwartz, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

Kochia can grow up to 6 feet tall. It is supported by a deep taproot. Stems are branched, round, slender and can be green to red in color (the stem can also be stripped). Leaves are lance shaped, 1/2-2 inches long, and are arranged alternately on the stem.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Options:

- Prevention – Learn to identify this weed. Remove tumble weeds from fence lines. Clean equipment after leaving infested areas to reduce the spread of seed.
- Mechanical – When kochia is young it can easily be pulled or hoed out. Once seed production has begun it is best to dispose of plant material. Light tillage during early growth stages can be an effective control measure. Mowing is not a great option, as seeds can be produced below mowing levels.
- Cultural – Establish healthy stands of beneficial vegetation that will compete with weed seedlings. Use management practices that will encourage the growth of beneficial plants.
- Chemical – Visit <https://pnwhandbooks.org/weed> then search “Kochia” for herbicide recommendations. 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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