

BUR RAGWEED



DESCRIPTION

Bur ragweed (*Ambrosia grayii* (A. Nelson) Shinnery) is a native, erect, perennial forb, one to two feet tall, that reproduces by underground rootstocks and seeds. Stems are usually branching from the base and covered with fine, woolly hairs that give the plant a silvery-gray to purplish-white appearance. The leaves are usually alternate (rarely opposite toward the base of the stem), broadly ovate, pinnately three to five-parted or entire, long-petioled, and dusty greenish-gray. The central lobe of the leaves is usually much larger than the lateral lobes.

Male and female flowers are borne in separate heads, with male heads drooping, about one-quarter inch in diameter, and produced in terminal racemes and female heads mostly solitary in the leaf axils, two-flowered, and less than one-quarter inch in diameter. The one-seeded fruits are bur-like, one-eighth to one-quarter inch long, and bear stout, straight or hooked spines that are one-sixteenth to one-eighth inch long. Flowering and fruiting occur from September until frost.

PREVENTION OF SPREAD

The Kansas Noxious Weed Law (K.S.A. 2-1313a et. seq.) requires all landowners to control the spread of and to eradicate bur ragweed on all lands owned or supervised by them. Methods used for control must both prevent the production of viable seed and destroy the plant's ability to reproduce by vegetative means. Infestation sites must be monitored after control methods have been implemented to ensure that dormant seeds in the seedbank do not germinate and establish new infestations.

BUR RAGWEED CONTROL PRACTICES

Bur ragweed control means that both the roots and the flowers must be destroyed. Because bur ragweed is a perennial, two or more of the control methods listed below must be used together to control bur ragweed, with the exception that herbicide applications may be used alone as a control.

Cultural Control

Cultural weed control involves land and vegetation management techniques used to prevent the establishment or control the spread of noxious weeds.

Frequent surveys of fence lines, roadways, ditches, and other susceptible areas for new infestations and the timely removal of any new plants will prevent bur ragweed from becoming established.

Mechanical Control

Mechanical weed control involves the physical removal of all parts or just the reproductive parts of weeds.

As a perennial species, bur ragweed is difficult to control mechanically. Controlling bur ragweed with cultivation would require tillage three to four inches deep every 14 to 21 days throughout the growing season to deplete the seedbank. Following this time period, the area should be regularly policed for new seedlings, which can be killed by further cultivation. When using this method, it is important to clean bur ragweed roots and root fragments from equipment before entering uninfested areas of the field or other fields to prevent the spread of bur ragweed.

Current residue requirements for cropland would not allow the excessive tillage needed to control bur ragweed. It is also not practical to clean cultivate over a two-year period because of the resulting wind and water erosion or loss of income due to lack of crop returns.

Chemical Control

The herbicides listed below may be used for cost-share with landowners to control bur ragweed. Other products labeled and registered for use on this noxious weed in Kansas may be used in accordance with label directions but are not available for cost-share. Be sure to follow all label directions and precautions. For additional information, consult the most recent edition of the Kansas State University publication of "Chemical Weed Control for Field Crops, Pastures, Rangeland, and Noncropland."

Any two or more of the herbicides listed below may be available for cost-share as a pre-mix or a tank mix if allowed on the respective labels. Contact your county weed program for availability.

Switching often between herbicides with different modes of action is highly recommended.

Herbicide	Mode of Action
2,4-D LV Ester	4
aminopyralid	4
dicamba	4
florpyrauxifen-benzyl	4
picloram	4

Biological Control

Biological control refers to the deliberate application of a living organism to control the spread of weeds. These agents will not eradicate their host plant; therefore, other control methods must be used in addition to the use of biological control agents as part of an integrated pest management strategy. The importation of biological control agents is regulated by USDA-APHIS and is allowed by permit only.

There are no biological control agents available for bur ragweed.

Sources: Kansas Department of Agriculture K.A.R. 4-8-32, Revised May 20, 2020
Photos: Richard Spellenburg, University of California Berkley; Curtis Thompson, Kansas State Research and Extension;
Goodwell and Texhoma, OK, *Pasture and Roadside Plants*

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