

Puncturevine

Colorado Department of
Agriculture

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Key ID Points

Identification and Management



Identification and Impacts

Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*) is a summer annual forb, and is native to Europe. The plant is prostrate or ascending, spreading into mat forming cover. The stems are trailing and can grow to 1 1/2 to 5 feet long. Leaves are formed into leaflets, with each leaflet containing 5 to 8 oval leaves. The leaves are hairy and opposite. The flowers appear in July through October. They have five petals and are yellow in color. Each flower node will produce a fruit, at maturity the fruit will break into 5 seed capsules. Each seed capsule will produce 2-4 seeds. Each capsule is hard and contains many spines, almost tack like. The shape of the seed capsule has been referred to as a "goathead." The seeds will propagate after the first moisture of the spring and then any wet period following. Seeds can stay viable for 4 to 5 years.

Habitats for Puncturevine include, but are not limited to roadsides, pastures, waste areas, cultivated fields, yards, and disturbed sites. The seed capsules can cause injury to humans, animals, and tires. Seeds can be found in hay, which may cause injury to animals. The capsules

can also become entangled in wool, and decrease the quality. Due to the spiny nature of the plant, spreading seed over large areas is fairly easy.

The key to effective control of Puncturevine is preventing the plants to produce seed. Puncturevine can easily be dug up, making sure to get all the roots and to bag any flowering parts. Chemical and biological controls can also be effective as treatment options. Details on the back of this sheet can help to create a management plan compatible with your site ecology.

Puncturevine is designated as a "List C" species on the Colorado Noxious Weed Act. It is required to be either eradicated, contained, or suppressed depending on the local jurisdictions managing this species. For more information, visit www.colorado.gov/ag/weeds and click on the Noxious Weed Program link. Or call the State Weed Coordinator at the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Conservation Services Division, 303-239-4100.



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Tribulus terrestris

**CULTURAL**

Cultural control for Puncturevine is a difficult task, since seed reserves can stay viable for 4 to 5 years. Preventing the plants from establishing, by eliminating bareground can assist in the process. For specific seed recommendations contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Services for seed mixes.

**BIOLOGICAL**

There are two biological controls available for control of Puncturevine; *Microlarinus lareynii*, a seed feeding weevil, and *Microlarinus lypriformis*, a stem boring weevil. Contact the Palisade Insectary of the Colorado Department of Agriculture at 970-464-7916 for more information.

**MECHANICAL**

Hand pull or dig when soil is moist, but make sure to wear gloves. Bag specimens carefully so as not to scatter seeds. This is helpful unless infestations are too large. The key to effective control is to prevent seed production and/or spread.

Integrated Weed Management:

Using a combination of control options can be effective in the control of Puncturevine. The plants are hard to eradicate, due to the seed viability of 4 to 5 years in the soil. Constant monitoring and management can be helpful.

Puncturevine

HERBICIDES

NOTE: The following are recommendations for herbicides that can be applied to range and pasturelands. Rates are approximate and based on equipment with an output of 30 gal/acre. Please read label for exact rates. Always read, understand, and follow the label directions. The herbicide label is the LAW!

HERBICIDE	RATE	APPLICATION TIMING
Glyphosate (Roundup) *Non-selective herbicide*	1.6% solution or 2 oz./gal water	Apply in early plant growth stages, emergence and rosettes.
2,4 D and Dicamba (Outlaw)	1-2 pints/Acre or 0.5-1.0 oz/gal water	Spring at emergence of seedlings continue through growing season. Add non-ionic surfactant 0.32 oz./gal water or 1 qt./100 gal water.
Chlorusulfuron (Telar)	1-3 oz./Acre	Apply pre-emergence or early post-emergence.
Pendimethalin (Pendulum)	2.1-4.2 qts/Acre	A pre-emergence spray.

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