

Noogoora burr

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Xanthium pungens

Introduction

Introduced into Australia from America, this annual herb can be found along rivers and creek flats, and will be moved into sugarcane fields with flood waters. Noogoora burr can be an aggressive competitor to sugarcane, especially after flood damage, significantly reducing potential yield if left unchecked. Seedlings of this weed have been known to kill domestic stock if eaten in sufficient quantities, as well as cause contact dermatitis on humans and animals.

Description

Noogoora burr is an annual herb growing from 2.5-4 m high on rare occasions. The stems are rough to touch, with short upward directed hairs, green, and usually blotched or streaked purple. The leaves can be ovate or triangular, 5-15 cm long with 3 or 5 lobes. They are dark green above, paler below, covered with small bristles and glandular hairs with coarsely toothed margins, and 3 prominent veins that are often reddish in colour. The Noogoora burr flowers are simple and inconspicuous and unisexual, however they are found on the same plant. Male and female flowers can be found in separate clusters in the upper leaf axils and at the ends of branches occurring mostly in summer and autumn. The seed is a brown burr, roughly 7-25 mm long, covered with hooked spines and ending in 2 diverging stout straight spines. Each contains two brown, grey or black seeds.

Management

As this weed is an annual it must be controlled before it sets seed, as the plant will die naturally after seed set with the resulting seeds adding to the weed seed bank.

There are a range of herbicides registered for control of Noogoora Burr. Always read the label for correct application rates for the particular product, weed situation and crop growth stage. Registered chemicals include:

Pre-emergent control

- Metribuzin (Soccer® 700 WG).

Post-emergent/ Recovery control

- 2,4D (eg. Amicide® 625, 2,4D LV ester 680).
- MCPA (eg. MCPA 500, Agritone® 750).
- Fluroxypyr (eg. Acclaim®, Starane™ Advanced, Comet® 400).
- Dicamba (eg. Cadence® WG) + Atrazine (eg. Gesaprim®).
- Glyphosate (eg. Roundup® Attack™, Wipeout® 360).

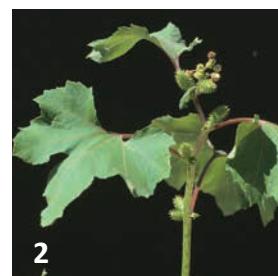
These weed seeds can be transported via flood waters, animals fur, clothing, harvesters, slashers, etc, so controlling this weed properly can be difficult. For an integrated weed management approach, a good place to start would be farm hygiene – making sure that farm equipment and harvesters are as free of seeds as possible before leaving a block that contains Noogoora burr. This weed will only grow from seed so if need be use farm equipment in Noogoora burr infected blocks before seed formation. Additionally, if possible control Noogoora burr along river or creek banks on your property to reduce the instance of seeds being transported onto your farm from flood water.

For further information

For further information about controlling Noogoora burr on your farm please contact your local adviser.



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1: Noogoora burr flower
(source: Dinesh Valke).

2: Noogoora Burr seed pod.

3: Whole plant (source: SRA).