Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Protect Grow Innovate

Biosecurity alert: Noogoora burr

(*Xanthium strumarium*)

The pest and its impacts

Noogoora burr (*Xanthium strumarium*) is one of the most serious and widespread weeds in the world. It is mainly found in areas with high rainfall and a temperate climate but it may also persist in arid environments, where the seeds may remain dormant for years and then take advantage of occasional rainfall to reproduce.

Noogoora burr is a declared pest for the whole of Western Australia, control category C3 (Management) in the Kimberley and C2 (Eradication) for the remainder of the state.

Infestations have been detected in the Pilbara region (DeGrey River catchment), Perth and near Denmark on the south coast.

Noogoora burr characteristics:

- In temperate climates, germination usually occurs between August and December but can occur at any time of year under favourable conditions.
- In the Kimberley region it is often abundant after spring or summer floods. In the wet season, germination occurs from December to March and the weed flowers from April to May. Ripe burrs begin to appear in June and continue until the plants die off, usually due to lack of moisture.
- Burrs float on water and the weed can be found along river and creek flats sometimes blocking access to water for stock and can also be found on roadsides and in pasture/grazing land.
- Seed is spread by burrs attaching to animals, clothing and bags.
- A single weed can produce as many as 11,000 burrs.

LOOK for this pest

Stems normally grow up to 2.5m in height but occasionally reach 4m. Stems lack spines and are often arranged in a zigzag manner and usually carry purplish blotches or streaks in young plants.

Leaves are similar in shape to a grapevine leaf with prominent veins. They have minute bristles on both surfaces and jagged edges.

Ripe burrs are woody, 10–20mm long and 4–8mm wide in an elongated egg shape. They contain two seeds and are densely covered with hooked spines with large hornlike projections at the tip.

Mature burr

Mature plant

Key points:

- reduces production in crops and pasture by competing for moisture, nutrients and light
- is poisonous to stock at the seedling stage
- may cause discomfort and injury to stock, particularly sheep
- high processing cost to remove burr from wool.

REPORT suspected sightings

- Prompt action is necessary to assist in eradication
- Note the date, time and location of the pest
- Take photographs, if possible

Report your observations

MyPestGuide® Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au

Pest and Disease Information Service
(08) 9368 3080
padis@dpird.wa.gov.au

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