

STEVE'S Weed of the Month

Buffalobur

Also Known As: buffalo bur, buffalo burr, Kansas thistle, Texas thistle, Mexican thistle, Colorado bur, buffalobur nightshade, prickly nightshade, horned nightshade

Buffalobur is a **Class A Noxious Weed**. Non-native species that are limited in distribution in Washington. State law requires that these weeds be **eradicated**.

Buffalobur (*Solanum rostratum* Dunal), is a member of the nightshade genus in the potato family. It is native to North America—ranging from central Mexico upward across the Great Plains of the United States—and can now be found throughout the United States. It is a fibrous tap-rooted annual that reproduces solely from seed. It grows 1–2 feet tall and has erect, hairy stems and ascending branches. The stems, leaves and seed pods of buffalobur are covered with long, yellow spines, 1/8–1/2 inch long. Prominently veined, deeply lobed leaves resembling those of a watermelon plant are 2–5 inches long and densely covered with stiff, sharp hairs. The flower of buffalobur is a 5-lobed corolla that is bright yellow and blooms from May to October, depending on location. The fruit of the plant are berries that are enclosed by a spiny calyx that enlarges to form a bur. Each berry produces 50–120 flattened, roundish seeds that are brown to reddish-brown and wrinkled or finely pitted. When mature, the main stem breaks off and the plant tumbles in the wind, scattering seeds—up to 8500 per plant. Drought resistant, buffalobur grows in many soil types, particularly those that are sandy. It occurs in disturbed, dry areas, and is often found along roadsides and in rangeland, overgrazed pastures, fields, and waste areas. It can also be found under bird feeders, as the seed is sometimes a contaminant of bird feed mixes.



Photo by: Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org



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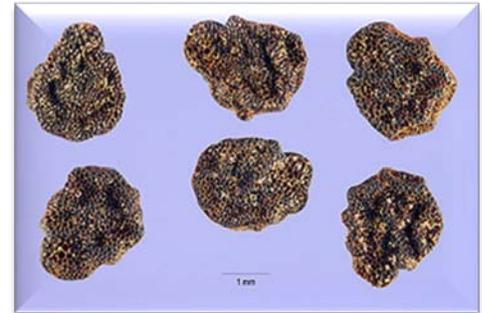


Photo by: Steve Hurst © USDA NRCS Plants Database

Control Methods

Cultural/Physical: Preventing seed production of this annual plant is fundamental to its eradication, so control efforts should be undertaken before blossoms appear. Because it is not a highly competitive plant, buffalobur can be suppressed by maintaining a competitive vegetative cover. The spines of buffalobur can cause puncture wounds, so protective clothing and gloves should be worn before attempting physical removal. The plant can be hand-pulled, hoed or dug (moistened soil makes easier). Repeated mowing and cultivation before flowering are also effective options.

Chemical: The herbicides dicamba, picloram, triclopyr, and 2,4-D can be effective in controlling buffalobur and should be applied prior to flowering. Spot treatment using glyphosate will also control buffalobur.

[More information can be found in the PNW Weed Management Handbook](#)

USE PESTICIDES WITH CARE. Apply them only to plants, animals, or sites listed on the label. When mixing and applying pesticides, follow all label precautions to protect yourself and others around you. It is a violation of the law to disregard label directions. Store pesticides in their original containers and keep them out of the reach of children, pets, and livestock.

Biological: Natural enemies may be found in native areas, but otherwise no biological control agents are available.

Questions: contact [Steve Van Vleet](#) or phone (509) 397 - 6290