

(revision date:3/19/2019)

**Weeds: Russian thistle (Tumbleweed)(*Salsola tragus* (*S. iberica*,
S. kali))**

family: *Chenopodiaceae*

cycle *Annual*

plant type: *Broadleaf*

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.

Biology

Russian thistle is a densely branched plant from an extensive root system. Young plants have soft, long, string-like leaves. As the plant matures, leaves become short and scale-like, with a sharp spine at the tip. Leaves are alternate on the red-and-green striped stems. The mature plant is spherical, up to three feet in diameter. The flowers are greenish to reddish and inconspicuous. They lack petals and are borne in the axils of upper leaves. At maturity, the plant breaks away from the roots at ground level and tumbles across the landscape, dispersing the small winged seeds. Seeds quickly lose viability in the soil, seldom persisting for more than a year. The large number of seeds produced and the plant's extreme water efficiency contribute to its success. Dried plants are highly flammable and present an extreme fire danger when they accumulate in large numbers.

Habitat

Russian thistle is found mainly on dry sites on both cultivated and waste ground, including fencerows and similar areas. It is also found on irrigated croplands and disturbed or overgrazed sites. It is not usually a problem on maintained lawn and turfgrass.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Maintaining a healthy planting or turf area to provide competition will prevent weed establishment.
- ~ Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants.
- ~ Hand-pull to eliminate weeds.
- ~ Careful digging is useful to manage weed populations. However, digging can carry undesirable weed seed to the surface and foster further germination.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

Apply according to label directions. Glyphosate products should be applied as spot treatments only!

NOTE: Some ingredients listed here are only available in combination. Read the label carefully on combination products to make sure the product is suitable for your specific situation.

Landscape Areas	Turf Areas	Bare Ground Areas
- glyphosate - dichlobenil - trifluralin - products containing diquat	- 2,4-D + MCPP + dicamba	- glyphosate - products containing diquat

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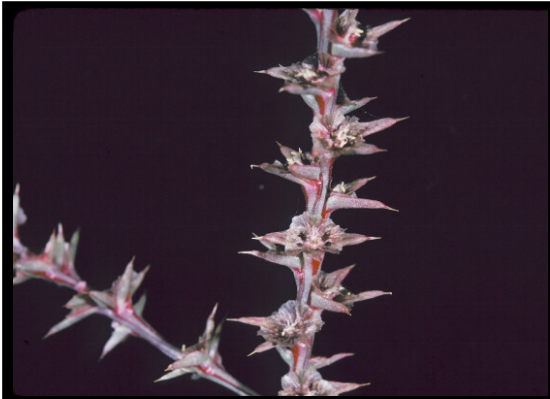
Images



~ Caption: Russian thistle
~ Photo by: R. Parker



~ Caption: Russian thistle seedling
~ Photo by: J.A. Kropf



~ Caption: Russian thistle stem with thorns
~ Photo by: R. Parker



~ Caption: Russian thistle leaves
~ Photo by: J.A. Kropf



~ *Caption: Russian thistle*
~ *Photo by: R. Parker*



~ *Caption: Russian thistle patch*
~ *Photo by: J.A. Kropf*