



Ada County

Pest of the Month



A quick guide to identifying and controlling invasive plants and animals found in the county

BUFFALOBUR

Buffalobur is a low growing, yellow-flowered, spined, hairy annual. The stems are erect and bushy, 1/2 to two feet long. The entire plant, except for the flower petals, is covered by straight yellow spines, 1/8 to 1/2 inch long. The leaves are alternate and two to six inches long including the stalks. Each leaf is irregularly cut into five to seven lobes, and often these are two to five lobed. The leaves are covered by short yellow star-like hairs, and the midribs, veins, and leaf stalks are spiny. The yellow flowers are five-lobed, wheel-shaped, 1 to 1.5 inches across, in few flowered clusters on spiny flower stalks. The calyx is covered by spines; it enlarges and forms a spiny bur, enclosing and completely covering the seedpod. The seeds are almost circular, 1/2 inch or slightly more in diameter, brown to reddish brown, flattened, irregularly angled, with a finely pitted surface. To identify Buffalobur, look for the tomato-like yellow flowers and the unique, extremely prickly leaves, stems and fruits.



Quick Facts



Buffalobur is considered to be a "nuisance weed" of barnyards, corrals, farms and rangelands. The burs may cause damage and considerable loss in wool value in sheep.

Buffalobur is native to the Midwest, where it is known to be highly aggressive and invasive. It is widely distributed in the western United States. It is an annual species that blooms in late June to early August. Buffalobur seeds are commonly mixed in with bird seed as well as flower and vegetable seeds where they are unknowingly planted into gardens.

Buffalobur can poison horses, sheep, goats and cattle. However, sheep and goats are more resistant than cattle. Its toxic agent is the glycoalkaloid solanine. The leaves and fruit contain solanine at all stages of growth. In some instances, as little as 0.1 to 0.3 percent of an animal's weight in buffalobur is enough to be toxic. The glycoalkaloid can cause two types of effects in a poisoned animal. Nervous effects include: incoordination, excessive salivation, loud and labored breathing; trembling; progressive weakness or paralysis, and nasal discharge. Effects of gastrointestinal irritation include: nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea w/ blood.

See control methods on other side...

How to Control

Prevention:

- Be aware of unusual or unintended plants in gardens, especially around bird feeders. Early detection is vital to prevent invasion.

Cultural:

- Plant desirable vegetation that will compete for space with Buffalobur.

Mechanical:

- Prevent seed production by repeated, close mowing and hoeing plants before blossoms appear.
- Small infestations or solitary plants can be hand dug or pulled (wear gloves)

Chemical:

- Weedmaster with 2,4-D can control Buffalobur.
- Buffalobur is moderately susceptible to 2,4-D when seedlings are immature. It becomes very resistant to 2,4-D after flowering. Weedmaster with 2,4-D usually provides more complete control than either herbicide alone. Read label carefully.



Note: Chemical control of any weed can be difficult and confusing. If you are not experienced in chemical control or do not understand the product label, you should consult a licensed applicator to assist you. Inappropriate application can kill desirable vegetation, and may violate federal law.



For questions or concerns, please contact :

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