

# Perennial Sowthistle

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Sonchus arvensis*

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Perennial Sowthistle grows 1.5 to 6 feet tall. The leaves clasp the stem and have a prickly lobed margin. The stems are hollow with a bitter milky sap, and they branch near the top. The yellow flowers are roughly 1.5 inches wide and open only mid-morning to noon. The roots can grow up to 10 feet deep and have horizontal rhizomes.

## WHERE DOES IT GROW?

Perennial Sowthistle grows in a wide variety of locations. Fields, waste areas, beaches, roadsides, stream banks, lawns, meadows, lake shores, can all be invaded.

**WHY IS IT A NOXIOUS WEED?** Perennial Sowthistle can greatly reduce the crop yields in infested fields.

## HOW DO I CONTROL IT?

See the reverse side for mechanical, cultural, biological, and chemical control options for Perennial Sowthistle. Also see our Chemical Treatment handout for more information about using herbicides.

**WANT MORE INFORMATION?** Call:

**Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control**  
10905 N. Ramsey Road  
Hayden, ID 83835  
208-446-1290

**kcnoxiousweeds@kcgov.us** or [www.kcweeds.com](http://www.kcweeds.com)

*Kootenai County does not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment in, its public meetings, programs, or activities. Requests for assistance or accommodations can be arranged by contacting the Noxious Weed Control Department at (208) 446-1290 or County Administration Office TTY (208) 446-2145 with 3 days advance notice.*



# How to Control Perennial Sowthistle

Perennial Sowthistle reproduces both by seed and by creeping roots. Control must be accomplished by attacking the root system as well as preventing seed.

**Mechanical** Grazing, cutting, mowing, cultivation, and digging can reduce seed production but will not eliminate infestations because root fragments are left to resprout.

**Cultural** The best long term weed control is to get your desirable native plants thriving. Seed and fertilize to get your native grasses growing vigorously. Alfalfa in particular is a strong competitor to Perennial Sowthistle and can over take it in a few years.

**Biological** There are currently no biocontrol agents available in the US for Perennial Sowthistle.

**Chemical** \* See our *Chemical Treatment* handout for more information on using herbicides.

- **Diflufenzopyr + Dicamba** are the active ingredients found in combination herbicide products such as **Overdrive** and **Distinct**. The combination is broadleaf selective (safe on grass) and labeled to control Perennial Sowthistle when applied during the rosette or bolting stage before buds form.
- **Aminopyralid** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Milestone**. It is broadleaf selective and can be effective on Perennial Sowthistle if applied during the rosette or bolting stages before buds form.
- **Clopyralid** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Transline** or **Stinger** and also found in combination products such as **Curtail** or **Redeem R&P**. It is broadleaf selective, safe on most conifer trees, and can be effective on Perennial Sowthistle if applied to the rosette or bolting stages before buds form.

*Recommendations are based on University of Idaho Extension Bulletin 865 [Idaho's Noxious Weeds 2011 Control Guidelines Noncrop and Rangeland Sites](#), the book [Weed Control in Natural Areas in the Western United States](#) published by UC Davis Weed Research & Information Center, and herbicide labels.*