



# PUNCTUREVINE

*(Tribulus terrestris)*

**WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?** Puncturevine is a low growing annual that can make dense mats up to 5 feet across. Small ½ inch, 5 petal yellow flowers appear soon after germination followed by seed capsules with 2 sharp spines resembling the head of a goat often giving the plant the common name of goatheads.

**WHERE DOES IT LIKE TO GROW?** This plant grows best in dry, loose, sandy soils but can survive in almost any type of soil. Usually reported first near agricultural sites or railroad yards, the weed is often found in hay, straw or manure.

**WHEN DOES IT BLOOM?** Puncturevine begins germinating during warm spring weather and continues until frost. Bright yellow flowers will begin to appear as early as 3 weeks after germination with seeds appearing one to two weeks later. The flowering time extends from June to October.

Flowers are only open in the morning.



## HOW DOES IT MAKE NEW PLANTS?

Puncturevine reproduces from seed only. Woody, spiny fruits with five segments, that will split when ripe, each contain one to four seeds. The spiny fruit segments help the seed to spread. Large and small seed spines

are arranged at different angles, so that no matter how the seed falls, at least one spine points upward to meet the unsuspecting foot, hoof, paw, vehicle or bicycle tire. The sharp spines easily penetrate leather, rubber tires, skin, or other surfaces, and may be transported some distance before being knocked or picked off.

**HOW DO I CONTROL IT?** As with all noxious weeds, prevention is the best control. Don't allow fields and pastures to become unhealthy and bare. Fertilizing to encourage strong growth of grasses is highly recommended. See the reverse side for more information on mechanical, cultural, biological and chemical treatment options for Puncturevine. Also see our Chemical Treatment handout for more information on using herbicides.



Want more information? Contact:

**Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control**

10905 N. Ramsey Road

Hayden, ID 83835

208-446-1290

[kcnoxioussweeds@kcgov.us](mailto:kcnoxioussweeds@kcgov.us) or [www.kcweeds.com](http://www.kcweeds.com)

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# How to Control Puncturevine

Puncturevine is an annual that reproduces by seed only. Control is achieved by preventing seed production.

**Mechanical** Pulling/digging can be effective on very small infestations when the ground is moist, if done before the hard spines develop. Existing seeds can sometimes be removed with carpet, boards, or other material that they can attach to.

**Cultural** The best long term weed control is to get your desirable native plants thriving. Killing weeds is only one step, you have to also replace them with something good. Seed and fertilize so your grass can take nutrients away from the weeds and not leave available open soil for new weeds to germinate.

**Biological** Two weevils are available as a management tool for Puncturevine. Contact Nez Perce Biocontrol Center for more information; (208)843-9374 or [nezpercebiocontrol.com](http://nezpercebiocontrol.com).

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

- **2,4-D** is the active ingredient in many herbicide products such as **Hardball**, **Weedar**, **Hi-Dep**, etc. It is broadleaf selective (safe on grass) and can be somewhat effective on small Puncturevine infestations if applied every 3 weeks throughout the season.
- **Chlorsulfuron** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Telar XP**. It is safe to most well established perennial grasses and can be effective on Puncturevine if applied as a preemergent or very early post emergent.
- **Imazapic** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Plateau**. It is safe on many perennial grasses and can be effective on Puncturevine if applied while the plant is actively growing.
- **Fluroxypyr** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as Vista XRT. It is broadleaf selective and can be effective on small Puncturevine plants if applied early while they are rapidly growing.

*Chemical 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.*