

Weed of the Month

Syrian Beancaper

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

Syrian beancaper (*Zygophyllum fabago* L.), a large, perennial forb, is native to the Mediterranean region and central Asia. The plant reproduces by seeds and spreads vegetatively from lateral roots. It is a compact, multi-branched shrub that grows either along the ground or somewhat upright. Mature shrubs can grow to 3' tall and spread 3' in diameter. Syrian beancaper has thick, hairless stems that become woody over time. The thick, fleshy, somewhat succulent leaves are smooth, hairless, and oval. They grow opposite one another in a pair of 1-inch leaflets that form a Y-shape. Syrian beancaper bears flowers in late spring or early summer, either singly or in pairs from the leaf axils. Each flower has 5 green sepals and 5 petals that are white to cream colored with pinkish markings. Ten orange stamens extend beyond the petals. The fruit, an oblong, 5-celled, ribbed capsule with 1 seed in each chamber, hangs down on the plant.



Photo by: Joseph M DiTomaso, University of California-Davis, Bugwood.org

A dry climate plant, Syrian beancaper inhabits deserts and dry grasslands, and invades disturbed areas such as roadsides, abandoned gardens, and highway borrow pits. Left uncontrolled, it forms large dense, colonies that displace native plants and animals and reduce forage potential.



Photo by: Dell O Clark, California Dept of Food and Agriculture, Bugwood.org



Photo by: Joseph M DiTomaso, University of California-Davis, Bugwood.org

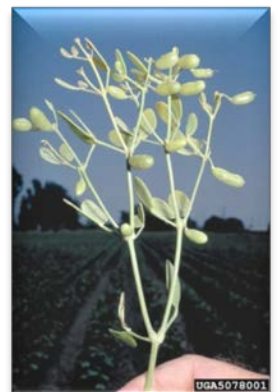


Photo by: California Dept of Food and Agriculture Archive, Bugwood.org



Photo by: Joseph M DiTomaso, University of California-Davis,



Photo by: Dell O Clark, California Dept of Food and Agriculture, Bugwood.org



Photo by: California Dept of Food and Agriculture Archive, Bugwood.org

Control Methods

Physical/Mechanical Control: Hand pulling on a regular basis may be effective if repeated often enough to exhaust the plant's food supply stored in the roots. Digging also works on small populations if the entire root system is diligently removed and the site is subsequently monitored for new growth. Mechanical control using cultivation is not usually a viable option with root-sprouting plants such as Syrian beancaper because it can create new plants and spread root fragments into uninfested areas, actually increasing the population.

Chemical Control: Herbicides are available to control Syrian beancaper; the timing of application depends on the herbicide selected. Picloram and glyphosate are commonly used to control beancaper. Picloram is recommended to be applied in the fall before a hard frost and when the plants are still actively growing, whereas glyphosate is to be applied during the bud stage of growth. Repeated applications will probably be necessary because the smooth, waxy leaves of beancaper reduce the amount of herbicide uptake. Surfactants can improve the effectiveness of the herbicide.

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 Control: No biological control agents are available. Cattle reportedly avoid grazing the plant.

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