Imperial County Agricultural Briefs

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Features from your Advisors

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SOME PROBLEMATIC WEEDS OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY

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It is important to identify weeds in order to understand their life cycle and management. Weeds can be summer or winter annuals, biannual, and perennials. The information on weeds emergence and life cycle is very important in implementing weed control measures in effective ways.

Some of the weeds have adopted to vegetable crop system and are extremely resilient from a management standpoint. Often it is difficult to control these weeds with some commonly implemented control practices. Most of the time, growers and PCA's have difficulty in identifying these problematic weeds, so farm advisors try to help these clientele by collaborating with Andrew Sanders at UCR Herbarium. In this article, we have tried to provide basic information's on some of the weeds that are becoming more common in Coachella Valley in recent years.

1. Salt grass (*Distichlis spicat):*

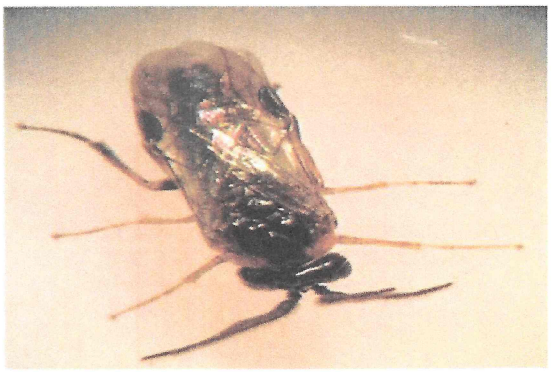
It is a perennial monocot which is native to California. It is distributed in a wide range of habitat ranging from the Coastal Salt Marshes to the Creosote Brush Scrub communities. Salt grass can be often confused with bermudagrass. Some differences between salt grass and bermudagrass is that salt grass produces glands that exude salt crystals and bermudagrass does not have these structures. In addition, bermudagrass spreads with stolons (runners) where as salt grass does not produce these reproductive structures. There are differences in flower characteristics between these species which also helps to distinguish them from each other.

2.Common purslane (*Portulaca oleracea* L):

Some of the common names for this weed species include portulaca and verdolaga. It is an annual dicot weed and

Source:
http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/WEEDS/purslane.html

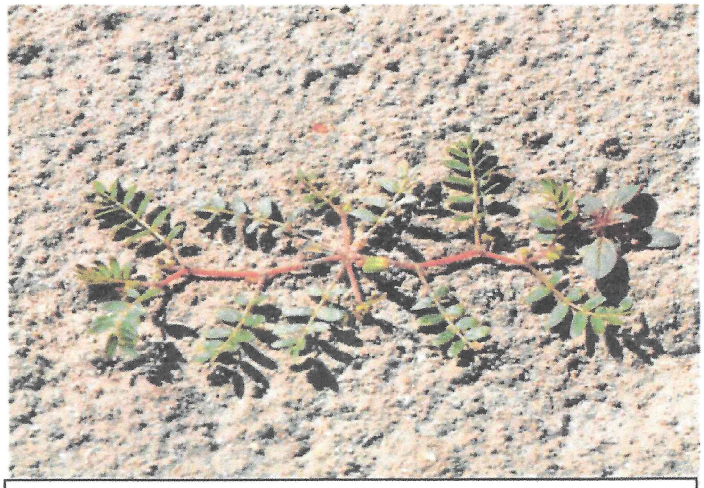
non-native to California. Common purslane is becoming a problematic weed in many agricultural production systems. It is a major weed in the organic production system because it is difficult to control with tillage and pieces of the plant can re-root in moist soil. Purslane produces yellow flowers in axils of the leaf/stem; the flowers are yellow in color. The plant produces tiny black colored seed with harder seed coat.



There is some biological control with the Purslane sawfly. By coincidence some were recently sent to the UCCE, Riverside office for identification.

3. Punctureveine (*Tribulus terrestris*):

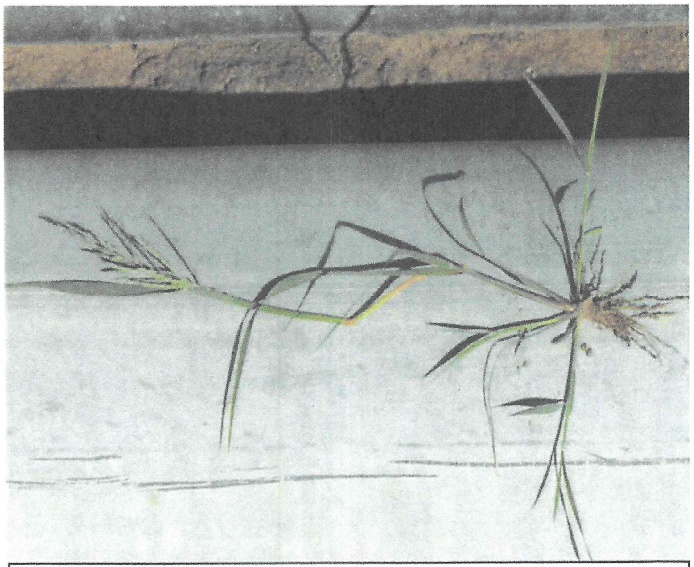
It is a summer annual, with prostrate growth habit and forms large mats on the ground surface. Punctureveine has a shallow taproot system. It is widely distributed throughout California. It is also listed as a "C-rated" noxious weed in California. It has adjusted to a wider range in terms of growing season and flowers from March to October. The flowers are bright yellow in color and produce seeds that remain viable for many years. Seeds produced are a woody bur and each bur has two sharp spines.



Source: http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/WEEDS/punctureveine.html

4. Mexican sprangletop (*Leptochloa fusca* ssp.):

It is a monocot weed that is native to California. It can be found in crop and non-crop areas. It is also primarily found in wetland areas. Is has upright growth habit and grows in clump. In the low desert region, this grass weed has been a major weed because it has developed resistance to grass herbicides such as Clethodim and Select Max.



Source: http://calscape.org/Leptochloa-fusca-ssp.-uninervia-()