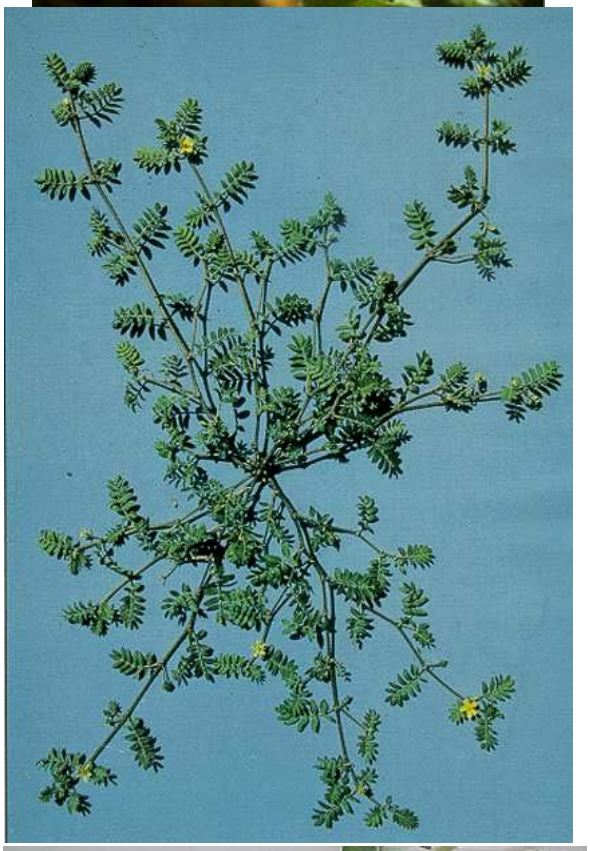
Puncturevine

Tribulus terrestris L. Caltrop Family

Key identifying traits

- Usually grows prostrate, with trailing stems forming a mat from 1-10 feet in diameter
- Opposite, compound leaves are divided into 4-8 pairs of small, oval leaflets covered with fine hair
- Yellow, 5-petaled flowers are up to ½" wide and are formed at the leaf axils
- When mature and dry, the 5-part fruit breaks into hard, tack-like structures with sharp spines



Biology and ecology

- Native to southern Europe, this annual spreads only from seeds that can remain dormant 4-5 yrs
- Grows best on dry sandy soils, but tolerates most soil types. Intolerant of freezing temperatures
- Foliage is toxic to livestock, especially sheep, when consumed in quantity
- The hard, spiny burs damage wool, are objectionable in hay, can be injurious to livestock and will puncture bicycle tires and feet
- Other names: goathead, Texas sandbur, tackweed

Control

Prevention – Learn to identify plants; pay particular attention at roadside pullouts and along driveways; monitor tires, shoes, animals for burs

Biological – Two weevils, *Microlarinus lareynii* and *M. lypriformis*, have been introduced into the U.S. and have given reasonably good results

Cultural – Healthy, competitive vegetation can protect against this invader

Mechanical – Tillage is effective prior to seed production. Hand-pulling is preferred for small infestations. Mowing is ineffective due to the prostrate growth habit

Chemical – Many herbicides are reported to be effective

Where found – The only known plant in the county was found in 2004 at a pull-out off of Hwy 395, just east of the Columbia River bridge outside of Kettle Falls. Report any sightings please!

Created by Stevens County Noxious Weed Control Board, Dec 2004