

Weed Identification List 2010

Caltech Community Garden
(North Avery Garden)

The weed problem in the communal bed and some individual plots has gotten out of hand this summer. To help us all identify and combat unwanted weeds at the garden, a list of the common weeds found (in order of prevalence, approximately) at the North Avery Garden is compiled below. If anyone finds a weed that is not on the list below, please let me know so that I can add it.

Please DO NOT put weeds into the compost bins unless one is absolutely sure that a) the weed is too immature to produce seeds AND b) the weed has no possibility of propagating vegetatively (i.e. dried to a crisp) because the composting methods we have in place do not reach temperatures required to kill weeds/weed seeds. Please put weeds into the white bin labelled 'TRASH', and whenever you feel like doing some good for the community garden, empty this bin in a dumpster. Thanks :)

WEEDING TIP: Try to pull weeds close to the base of the plant where the roots enter the ground. It may be necessary to lightly loosen the soil around the area with a tool. Most weeds will regrow if only the leaves are pulled off but the stem and roots remain (what a waste of effort!) Be extra careful with weeds that have already seeded. Try to minimize leaving broken parts with seeds in the soil. Some weeds (e.g. nutsedges) have deep rhizomes, please see details below for this particular weed.

Information compiled here is summarized from the UC Online Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program website www.ipm.ucdavis.edu. They maintain all copyrights. A few selected images are pasted here for easy reference. Please refer to the links provided for full details on each weed species.

1. Creeping spurge



http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/creeping_spurge.html

Description: leaves are oblong, hairless, 2-7mm long

Characteristics: milky sap, can cause skin irritation

Propagation: seed and creeping stems that root at nodes

BAD: host for fungal diseases and attracts pests that damage crops

2. Purple nutsedge



http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/purple_nutsedge.html

Description: 3-6mm wide leaves resemble grasses but are thicker and stiffer, arranged in sets of 3; stems are solid and triangular in cross section; height to 40cm; tubers up to 1 inch at maturity

Propagation: from tubers formed on rhizomes as deep as 8-14 inches below the soil surface (though majority occur in the top 6 inches of soil), new plants form from buds on tubers, forming patches up to 10 feet or more in diameter

BAD: One of the most noxious weeds in agriculture, control is difficult once established. Prevent establishment by removing small plants (before they have 5-6 leaves) before they develop tubers; in the summer this is about every 2-3 weeks. Continually removing shoots depletes energy reserves in the tuber. However mature tubers can resprout more than 3 times. The best way to remove small plants is to pull them by hand or to hand hoe (dig down at least 8-14 inches to remove entire plants). Other methods of control include drying and shading, but these will be a challenge to implement in a community garden setting. More information at <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7432.html>

3. Annual sowthistle



http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/annual_sowthistle.html

Description: resembles dandelion (lobed leaves, yellow flowers); leaves are bluish green; stems are thick smooth and hollow; plants vary in size and height; white fluffy seed heads are not ball-shaped like in dandelions

Characteristic: secretes milky sap when cut

Reproduction: by seed

BAD: can harbor pests such as aphids and nematodes, which all are potential vectors of plant viruses

4. Willowherb



<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/E/W-ON-ECIL-FL.005.html>

Description: Native broadleaf plant. Considered desirable in natural habitats, but can be weedy in garden

sites. Leaves are lance shaped to egg shaped. Flowers have 4, white to violet-pink petals and are attached to long slender stalks that form the fruit capsules with 4 chambers. When seeds mature, the capsules split open, exposing flattened egg shaped seeds (~1mm) with tufts of soft hairs attached at the end.

Reproduction: by seed

5. Creeping woodsorrel



http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/creeping_woodsorrel.html

Description: A relative of the beautiful bermuda buttercup. Leaves resemble those of clover and range from green to dark purple-tinged. Each heart-shaped leaflet can reach 1cm long and 2.5cm wide. Stems are up to 7cm long.

Reproduction: by seed and above ground horizontal stems that root at joints

BAD: Highly adaptable to all kinds of habitats. Invasive as spreading horizontal stems can reach 12 inches long. Removal of entire root is required, otherwise plant will regrow from buried root. Oxalate content dangerous to livestock.

6. Cudweed



<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/cudweeds.html>

Description: Cotyledons and first true leaves are covered with whitish to light gray woolly hairs. The first true leaves have smooth edges and taper gradually toward the base. Mature plant is sparsely branched, mostly erect and up to 20 inches tall.

Reproduction: by seed

7. Bermuda grass



<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/bermudagrass.html>

Description: Creeping stems (stolons) will root at stem joints (nodes), spreading, branching and forming dense mats.

Reproduction: By seed and horizontal stems both above ground (stolons) and below ground (rhizomes)

BAD: Grows rapidly in warm moist conditions, very invasive. Need to remove stolons and rhizomes completely. Even a small piece left behind will regrow.

8. Various other grasses that produce seeds or rhizomes, for example:





http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/grass_preview.html

9. Spotted Spurge



http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/spotted_spurge.html

Description: Low growing summer annual that forms a dense mat. Leaves are oblong to egg shaped, 4-17mm long. Stems can grow up to 20 inches in length.

Characteristics: Reddish spot along center of leaf. Stem secretes milky sap that can cause skin irritation.

Reproduction: by seed

BAD: host for fungal diseases and attracts pests that damage crops

10. Blessed Milkthistle



<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/milkthistle.html>

Description: These plants are just nasty prickly. Even seedlings have a prickly-toothed edge. Used as a medicinal herb.

Reproduction: by seed