

Green Section Record

REGIONAL UPDATE

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LOOKALIKE CARROT-TOP WEEDS—WHICH DO YOU HAVE?

BY PAT GROSS | REGIONAL DIRECTOR, WEST REGION

Spring has seen an explosion of weeds in the Southwest following a winter of above-average rainfall. There is a group of weeds visible right now that have similar carrot-like foliage but are actually very different weeds. All of them can tolerate low mowing and they can be seen in tees, fairways and even greens. Here is a guide to identifying and controlling these carrot-top weeds

Swinecress (*Coronopus didymus*) – Swinecress is in the mustard family. It has finely divided feathery leaves that are alternate on the stem and a strong tap root. The flowers are a tiny cluster of green balls in the leaf axils. Swinecress has an extended germination period from September through June and persists in the shade. Crushing the leaves and flowers produces a skunky smell. The key to identification is the tap root, the green ball flowers and the skunky smell.

Southern Brassbuttons (*Cotula australis*) – Southern brassbuttons is in the sunflower family. It has light green feathery leaves that are toothed and covered in fine hairs. The flowers are pale yellow disks, 0.125-0.25 inch in diameter; there are no petals on the flower. Southern brassbuttons has a weak tap root that is often multibranched. It is visible from winter through spring and there is no skunky smell.

Spurweed or Lawn Burweed (*Soliva sessilis*) – Spurweed is in the sunflower family. It has feathery dark green leaves that are opposite on the stem and finely hairy. The roots are fibrous. The flower is a green ball that forms in the leaf axils that becomes a spiny bur about 0.25 inch in diameter. Spurweed is visible spring through summer. The key to identification is the fibrous root system and the spiny bur.

Wild Celery (*Apium leptophyllum*) – Wild celery is in the carrot family. It has feathery dark green leaves that are much divided with branched stems. Wild celery produces a tiny cluster of white flowers on short stalks. It has a strong tap root. Wild celery is visible winter through spring, mostly in dormant bermudagrass. The key to identification is the tap root, divided stems and tiny white flowers.

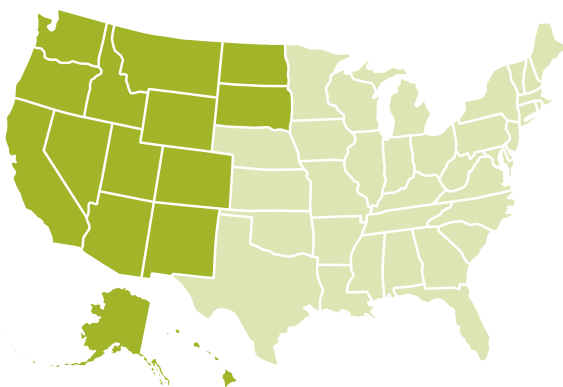
Pineapple Weed (*Matricaria matricariodes*) – Pineapple weed is in the sunflower family. The leaves are feathery, bushy, hairless and light green in color. It has a shallow tap root with secondary fibrous roots. Pineapple weed has a yellow cone flower that forms at the tip of the stem and has a sweet pineapple smell when crushed. Pineapple weed is visible winter through spring. The key to identification is the sweet-smelling, cone-shaped flower.



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So how do you control these weeds? The best control is achieved with a mid-October application of a preemergence herbicide. Good control can be achieved in both warm-season and cool-season grasses with preemergence herbicides containing isoxaben or dithiopyr. Isoxaben is especially good for preventing swinecress. Postemergence control can be achieved in most warm-season and cool-season turf species with herbicides containing clopyralid or three-way herbicide combinations containing 2,4-D, mecoprop and dicamba. Another option in cool-season grasses is triclopyr. Remember to always consult the herbicide label and apply all herbicides in accordance with label directions and state regulations.



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