

PUNCTUREVINE

(*Tribulus terrestris*)



Puncturevine, an annual which reproduces by seed, is variously known as sandbur, bur nut, and tackweed. It is found on barren soil, waste places, and roadsides in North America; it is somewhat more common on the sandy soils of arid regions. Puncturevine is listed as a noxious weed by several states. It has been called the "most disliked weed"; and this dislike is reflected in the Latin origins of the technical name, which roughly means "affliction from the earth."

A member of the caltrop family, Zygophyllaceae, puncturevine has a circular prostrate habit of growth. Radiating stems trail away from the crown to a distance of 8 feet, hugging the ground, forming dense mats.

Stems are freely branching, and may turn upwards at the ends when plants are in competition for light. Stems are covered with fine hairs which give plants a silky, shiny-green coloration.

Leaves are opposite on the stem. Each leaf is made up of 4 to 8 pairs of small, oblong, rounded leaflets; these, too, are hairy.

Solitary, small, bright-yellow flowers, each with 5 petals, are found in the axils of leaves (where leaf meets stem). These short-stalked flowers open only in the mornings. Flowering begins when a plant is still small and continues on new growth throughout the growing season.

After blooming, seeds are formed inside spiny hulls or burs. Each flower will form 5 flat, spiny burs. Each horny bur contains 2 or more seeds and is armed on the outside with 2 sharp spines. These spines are tough enough to penetrate shoes, and bicycle tires.

Seeds remain in the soil, sometimes many years, before germinating under favorable conditions.

The root is a simple shallow taproot.

One-half to 1 lb. of 2,4-D per acre applied before puncturevine flowers, and while it is actively growing, will kill the plant.

Applied after blooming, 2,4-D will kill the plant, but will have no effect on the seeds already formed inside the matured burs, nor on the spines of this vicious weed's seed pods.

Prepared in cooperation with Crops Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Maryland.

(DRAWING FROM NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL PUBLICATION NO. 36, USDA EXTENSION SERVICE)

LA Agency Plans New School to Teach Aspiring "Plantsmen"

A new program sponsored by the Los Angeles Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens will seek to train would-be professional gardeners and landscapers in the fundamentals of horticultural science.

Known as the Arboretum Gardener School, the program will last for 42 weeks, and will be offered in the Agency's facilities at 301 North Baldwin, Arcadia, Calif. Starting date is September 28.

Division of the course into both lecture periods and on-job training is expected to offer students a well-rounded background in the subject. Included in lecture periods are discussions of botany, plant identification, plant propagation, turfgrass culture, insects, and diseases.

In the practical phase, greenhouse practices, nursery skills, and related techniques will be taught. There will be field trips to commercial nurseries and botanical gardens.

On completion, officials will award course completion certificates, and will assist in job placement for qualified graduates.

There is no charge for this unique course. Those interested in enrolling should write to Dr. Louis B. Martin at the address given above for further information and an application form. Interviews may be arranged by appointment.

"Fairway Food" New From IMC

A new fertilizer which combines natural organic nitrogen, and IMC Pot O'Gold ureaformaldehyde, has been introduced by International Minerals and Chemical Corp. Called IMC Gold Cup Fairway Food, the turf nutrient is said to provide quick response and slow, steady feeding.

Proportioned phosphate content assures root formation and root growth, IMC says. The material is packaged in 50-lb. bags.

For more information write Lawn and Garden Department, International Minerals and Chemical Corp., Skokie, Ill.