

## FIELD SANDBUR

(*Cenchrus pauciflorus*)



Field sandbur is known by a number of common names such as mat sandbur, burgrass, beargrass, and hedgehoggrass. It is native to North America and widespread from the northeastern U.S. to Central America. It is most troublesome in southern states and infrequently found on the west coast.

This weed pest is an annual which grows 6 to 24 inches in height (1). It may grow as a spreading plant but usually is somewhat flattened and prostrate, forming a semidecumbent mat upon the ground. Animals will graze the plant when it is young and tender; but once heads develop, it is annoying to both man and animal as the terminal spikes of burs readily puncture the skin. Leaf blades which are 2 to 5 inches long are smooth and flat, attached to a sheath with hairy margins which often partially enclose a cluster of burs. Each head contains many burs which are covered with sharp, hook-tipped spines. Each single straw-colored bur (2) contains 1 to 3 small seeds (3).

Field sandbur normally grows from July through September and can be found in waste areas, cultivated fields and pastures, lawns, gardens, and along roadsides. It grows particularly well in sandy places.

Because the plant grows close to the ground, mowing is not effective for control. Cultivation before seed formation, however, will control the plant for the season. Chemical control is possible with arsonate herbicides at 3 to 5 pounds per acre while plants are vegetative. Preemergence treatment with 2,4-D at rates of 2 pounds per acre may sometimes give good control. TCA is also effective as a preemergence treatment. Dalapon can be used as a post-emergence treatment but these latter treatments may also injure the desirable grass species.

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

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## Trimmings

**Try Kentucky Windage.** If you can't soil test, fertilize by eye rather than by formula. Your good sense of observation will serve better than a formula. That's the thinking of Dr. Richard Davis, Agronomist at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. He points out that too many variable factors influence fertilizer application rate. Soil type, species and variety of grass, removal of clippings, soil moisture, and use of the area are variables which he says affect workability of a simple formula.

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**Railroaders Rely On Chemicals.** Way back, before 1920, hand labor kept railway rights-of-way free of weeds and brush. Since, however, chemicals have been used more and more. Today, railroads are spending \$30 million yearly in weed and brush control, most for chemicals.

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**So Much Is Bull.** It's the time of year again when so many spend so much for organic fertilizers, which admittedly are packaged beautifully and which admittedly have some value. But animal fertilizers in terms of actual value can run \$50 for every 1000 square feet of lawn, if enough nitrogen to do the job is put on via this method. By contrast, about \$4 will buy equal value in commercial chemical fertilizer. Further, the grass can't tell the difference.

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**Made-for-Colorado Fertilizers.** Three specialists in the industry have formed their own firm known as Lawn Specialists Co., at Denver, Colo. They package and distribute made-for-Colorado lawn products, basing their thesis on the need for specific products to fit Colorado turf. Dale Langford, county agricultural agent, Gary Bryant, lawn and garden product representative, and Dean Schiemann, graduate horticulturist, pooled their experience and came up with a unique sales and service organization which can only help the industry. They point out that most nationally distributed products are designed for markets where both climate and soil differ from that of Colorado.

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**Picture Worth 1000 Words.** Both Senate and House Interior Appropriations subcommittees recently received a picture showing a sign advertising such young trees as potted evergreens, red cedar, blue spruce and ponderosa pine for sale at 25¢ each from a Wyoming government nursery. Vice President Robert F. Lederer of the American Association of Nurserymen, who made the picture available to Congress, reports that a neighboring private nursery at the same time was selling similar trees at \$1.50. His point that government nurseries can't produce trees any cheaper than private concerns can be well taken. Nor can private operators long afford to pay taxes to finance government grown trees and then compete with government selling prices which are less than 20% of the fair market value.