

Noogoora burr

Noogoora burr (*Xanthium strumarium*) is a summer-growing annual and is considered one of the world's most serious and widespread weeds. Its hooked burrs stick to wool, contaminating it, and pose a major problem for pastures and cropping land.



What does it look like?

Noogoora burr is an upright annual herb that can grow to 3m tall. Its stems are marked with purple blotches or streaks, have a somewhat zigzagged pattern, and are covered in short, coarse, upward-pointing hairs. The leaves are dark green on the upper surface; the lower leaves grow in opposite formation, while the upper leaves alternate and resemble the shape of maple leaves.

The seeds are brown or black, with each burr containing two seeds measuring 6-10mm in length. One seed is larger and flattened on one side.

Flowering mainly occurs in summer, between December to March. Seeds develop from

February to April, and germination from September through to January.

Where is it found?

Noogoora burr prefers warm, unshaded areas within temperate regions, typically favouring fertile and disturbed soils subject to summer rainfall and flooding. In semi-arid regions, it often establishes near watercourses.

Within the SA Arid Lands region, it is considered a Priority Weed in the North East Pastoral and Marree-Innaminka districts, and an Alert Weed in Port Augusta-Quorn, North Flinders, Marla-Oodnadatta and Kingoonya districts.

What is its impact?

Noogoora burr can form dense stands which, if left uncontrolled, can cover and dominate entire paddocks.

The hooked burrs can become entangled in sheep's wool and it is a major cause of 'vegetable fault' in wool as the burrs often matt the wool, particularly under the neck and on the belly of the sheep, resulting in serious damage to carding machines.



Because burrs cannot be removed mechanically, the wool must be carbonised, a costly process that increases production expenses.

Additionally, burrs can lodge in animal's hooves, causing irritation, infection and sometimes, lameness.

A major infestation of this weed will seriously reduce carrying capacity.

The seeds and seedlings are poisonous to certain animals, particularly cattle.

What can you do?

Prevention is the best control strategy. Continue to monitor your property for new outbreaks and control to prevent establishment.

Livestock carriers can transport burrs along with the wool and fur of livestock. Inspect all vehicles when arriving and leaving properties to help prevent the spread.

Mechanical

Manual removal is a viable option for smaller infestations, but it's important to ensure the entire root system is removed.



Chemical

Herbicide control should be undertaken prior to burr formation. For advice on chemical control techniques, contact the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board.

Also refer to [PIRSA's Weed control handbook for Declared plants in South Australia](#) for advice on chemical control. You are also able to pick up a copy of this handbook at the SAAL Landscape Board office in Port Augusta.

What are your responsibilities?

Noogoora burr is a declared plant under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*.

Landholders must control the plant on their property. Sale or movement of plants or goods containing plants or plant parts is prohibited within South Australia.

More information

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