



Weed of The Week

Catchweed Bedstraw (*Galium aparine* L.)

This week's weed of the week features a winter annual that loves to call your flower gardens and landscapes home. Catchweed Bedstraw is a semi-prostrate, mat-forming winter annual weed that can also grow as a summer annual. This weed has many growth habits and features that make it very difficult to control, including prolific seed production, vining growth habit, and shade tolerance. Catchweed Bedstraw is growing throughout most of the eastern United States but has been growing in every state except Hawaii. Catchweed Bedstraw prefers rich moist soils high in organic matter. Habitats of this weed include small grain crops, landscapes, turf areas, and fence lines. This weed is not tolerant to heavy tillage or disturbance, so it is not a big issue for most agronomic crops. Key Identifiers of this weed are its sessile-shaped leaves formed in a whole and covered with hook-shaped hairs that resemble Velcro. The stems of this plant are square and covered with velcro-type hair. Germination of this plant will begin in the fall, but a late spring or early summer flush is not abnormal. Small white flowers will begin to appear in mid-May and the fruits will be produced and dropped in June. Fruits of Catchweed Bedstraw are also covered with velcro-type hair that can be caught in clothing and hair of livestock or wildlife, this aids in the distribution of this plant making it a fast spreader. Cultivation and hand pulling should be conducted before flowering and seed development. If hand pulling is conducted, make sure to wear gloves and long sleeves to avoid skin irritation. Herbicide control can be effective when applied in the fall or early spring before the reproduction growth stage. Glyphosate can be very effective in landscapes but avoid drift or misapplication to sensitive plants. 2-4-D or Dicamba products can be effective herbicides in lawns or turf production.

