

Weed of The Week

Mistletoe (*Phoradendron* spp.)

This week's weed of the week features a holiday favorite but for Livestock producers and forest managers this weed could be a kiss of death! Mistletoe is not a common species found in Ohio, but it can be found most readily along the Ohio River. Considered a parasitic evergreen plant, Mistletoe will grow in the top portion of the tree scavenging trees for water and nutrients. Mistletoe can be found growing on over 105 different tree species, but in Ohio the main tree species threatened are walnut, oak, silver maple, Ash, sycamore, and birch trees. Mistletoe produces white berries containing very sticky seeds. These berries are consumed by birds that later disperse the seeds throughout the forest canopy. This parasitic plant lacks the ability to produce chlorophyll, depending on all the basic needs of food and water on the tree. The result of Mistletoe growing on trees can be detrimental to the trees health and ability to survive winter. Mistletoe can also be very toxic to humans and livestock if consumed. There is not a easy of effective way to control Mistletoe, options include hand pulling or cutting, Herbicide use (ethephon in the dormant season), and planting resistant varieties.

