



Weed of The Week

Perennial Sow Thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)

Thought to be a source of protection for rabbits, this week's weed of the week features Perennial Sow Thistle. Just as the name implies this weed is a perennial originating in Europe and spreading with early settlers throughout most of the Eastern United States and Southern Canada. Sow thistle can be found growing in pastures, roadsides, gardens, lawns, and crop fields but prefers rich, well drained soils. Some key identifiers of this weed are its small yellow dandelion flower, hollow purplish stem, and long lobed leaves with irregular teeth with prickly thorns. Perennial Sow Thistle will begin flowering in mid-June and continue throughout the summer and into the fall. One plant can produce well over 9,000 seeds. Reproduction can also arise from a creeping root system like Johnsongrass, when fragmented by tillage new shoots can occur. Controlling sow thistle is not an easy task. Shallow tillage should be avoided but deep tillage combined with herbicides such as 2-4-D, Glyphosate and Dicamba. For pastures, good grazing management is critical and some species of livestock such as goats do consume enough of the plant to keep it under control. Pasture and grassland herbicides such as Chaparral and GazeonNext HL work very well.

