



Weed of The Week

Sicklepod (*Senna obtusifolia* L.)

This week's weed of the week features a worthless legume called Sicklepod. Sicklepod is a member of the Fabaceae family or often referred to as the bean/pea family. Even though this weed is classified as a legume, it fails to fix nitrogen but rather steal large quantities of nitrogen from your cash crop! Sicklepod is throughout much of the eastern United States, but this plant is actually native to the American tropics where natives used the plant's seeds for medicinal uses such as a natural laxative. Recently agronomists in south America have found that Sickle pod can actually be a host to soybean rust fungus. Key identifiers of this weed include, young round cotyledons leave with 3-5 distinct veins that resemble other common weeds and even clover species. The stems of this plant are erect and branched with no hairs. Mature plants can reach heights of 6 feet tall at the most but more commonly 3ft. Leaves are alternate, and egg-shaped and arrange pinnately compound meaning opposite from each other. Sicklepods main form of reproduction is from seed, but it does feature a very hardy taproot making it a challenge to kill. Flowering takes place in mid-summer and can continue well into early fall; flowers are yellow, and petals are directly connected to the leaf axil. Sicklepod can be found growing in many different environments such as row crop pasture and unfortunately, this weed is very shade tolerant. Deep tillage and crop rotation with perennials are good practices to control sicklepod, the use of herbicides such as 2-4-D and Glyphosate mixed can be effective as well.

