



Weed of The Week

Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum Umbellatum.*)

Since this week is Christmas, I thought I would stick with a holiday themed weed of the week. This week I present Star of Bethlehem, often considered a favorite wildflower among many. This wildflower can occasionally go rogue and become a hard to control weed in pastures, hayfields, and even row crop fields. Star of Bethlehem is a perennial that starts from a bulb and has a very similar growth habit as wild garlic. This plant is mainly found growing in the northeast region of the United States. Star of Bethlehem has many key identifiers such as a leafless flowering stem that reaches 12 inches in height and a white mid vein. The flower is just as the name refers to, a small white star like flower that will produce a small 3 lobed capsule containing many small black seeds. The root system gives this plant dominance over other plant species due to its large bulb, storing nutrients for plant survival and reproduction. The main reason why this pretty to look at flower has made the weed list is due to its poisonous properties. **Every plant part is toxic to livestock** (especially horses) if consumed, containing cardiotoxins and glycosides. Controlling Star of Bethlehem is a challenge but constant mowing to prevent flowering can be very effective. Digging up the plant bulb can be very effective in small infestations. Spot applications of dicamba or 2-4-D can have somewhat control but not complete.

