



Weed of The Week

Virginia Pepperweed (*Lepidium virginicum* L.)

Often referred to as poor – man’s pepper, this week’s weed of the week features a common winter annual weed taking control of many no-till crop fields this time of year. Virginia Pepperweed establishes in early fall and will go dormant over the winter, as the soil warms in the spring the plant will break dormancy and grow very quickly. Just as the name refers this weed’s cotyledons have a pepper taste. Distributed throughout most of the United States, Virginia Pepperweed is commonly found growing in low disturbed row crop fields, roadside, and prefer well drained soils. Reproduction is by seed and flowering takes place in early spring but can continue through the summer depending on germination. The seed head of this weed is long and slender, producing individual small white flowers with 4 greenish white petals and 2 stamens. The fruit of Virginia Pepperweed is held in small pods that will produce a peppery taste and aroma. Control of this weed should be done in the fall during the plant’s rosette stage of growth. Good pasture management will allow forages to outcompete the weed prevent growth in the fall and spring. In crop fields, tillage can incorporate the seed, preventing germination. Herbicide application in the fall can be quite successful in reducing populations of Virginia Pepperweed in the spring. Applications of 2-4-D, Glyphosate, Glufosinate, Dicamba, Metribuzin, and Saflufenacil (sharpen) have good control. Raptor and Pursuit are two good products for established alfalfa stands.

