



Weed of The Week

Waterhemp (*Amaranthus rudis*)

There are several species in the pigweed family that are commonly found throughout Ohio. All these plants are similar in appearance as well as damage they cause to agronomic crops. Waterhemp is a summer annual broadleaf weed. Waterhemp does not have any hair on its stem. The leaves are long and narrow in shape and have short petioles. The leaves are alternate and waxy in appearance. Many small green flowers form an inflorescence from July to September. The terminal inflorescence can be over 1 foot in length. Multiple wiry lateral branches occur throughout the inflorescence. These plants can grow up to 10 feet tall, although 4 to 6 feet is more common. Waterhemp is a dioecious species, meaning male and female flowers are found on separate plants. With pigweeds, a major problem is the large quantity of seeds produced on a single plant. One plant can easily produce anywhere from 250,000 to 1 million seeds depending on growing conditions.

Waterhemp in Ohio has devolved a resistance to multiple groups of herbicides. It is important to scout your fields for any of the pigweeds and remove them before they are allowed to go to seed. When managing waterhemp, use of chemical and mechanical control is strongly recommended. Always clean equipment that was used in a field with waterhemp present. Deep tillage helps bury waterhemp seeds to reduce the number of germinated seeds. Fall seeded cover crops can reduce early season emergence of waterhemp. Chemical control of waterhemp includes using a full rate of an effective pre-emerge, soil residual herbicide very close to the time of planting. The over reliance of post-emerge herbicides for waterhemp control has contributed to the development of herbicide resistance.

