



Weed of the Month: Red Sesbania

Welcome to our "Weed of the Month" feature, designed to raise awareness about the impact of noxious invasive weeds on our environment. This month, we're focusing on Red Sesbania (*Sesbania punicea*), an aggressive plant species that poses a significant threat to native ecosystems and agricultural lands.



Identification:

Red Sesbania is a deciduous shrub or small tree. It displays reddish-orange flowers that are ½ to 1 inch long that grow in dense and drooping clusters. At its maturity, the plant can grow up to fifteen feet tall. It produces 3-4-inch-long seedpods that are dark brown and have four wings that run vertically down the pod. The shrub has alternate leaves that are one inch long and have dark green leaflets. It has a bloom period of March to October.

Top Left- Red Sesbania infestation.

Middle Right – Red Sesbania flower cluster.



Invasive Behavior:

Originating from South America, Red Sesbania has become very invasive to many parts of North America. It thrives in a variety of habitats, including coastal plains, roadsides, ditches, canals, and riparian corridors. The shrub is also able to survive the occasional freeze. It usually spreads to wildlands that are next to or downstream from ornamental plants. It reproduces by seed and is transported by waterways and horticulture.



Middle Left- Red Sesbania seed pod.

Bottom Right- Red Sesbania seeds.

Impact:

The presence of Red Sesbania can have serious ecological and economic consequences. The shrub forms in dense communities making it extremely difficult to access riparian areas. It also contributes to erosion and flooding and large infestations can decrease water flow and recreational use. It is toxic to not only humans but livestock lowering forage quality. This is a cause for concern for both growers and ranchers.





Control and Management:

Rapid response is vital when it comes to the control of Red Sesbania because it grows at a fast pace with dense populations. Mechanical control methods include hand pulling which can be very easy considering that the shrub does not have a large root system. There are currently no biological control methods that are approved by the USDA at this time. Chemical control methods are most effective when the shrub is cut down to a stump. This method eliminates the seed pods and targets the plant at the base to enter the root system. This practice should be used judiciously to minimize impact on non-target species.

Prevention:

Preventing the spread of Red Sesbania is key to its control. Routinely inspect and maintain your property for any signs of this invader. Be vigilant for any signs of this weed in your area.

By staying informed and taking proactive measures, we can work together to curb the spread of Red sesbania and protect our native ecosystems. Join us next month for a new "Weed of the Month" feature, where we'll highlight another noxious invasive plant and share tips on how to address it.

For more information about Red Sesbania, feel free to visit the UC Weed Research and Information Center website at:

https://wric.ucdavis.edu/information/natural%20areas/wr_S/Sesbania.pdf

For more information about our other county programs, visit our website at:

<https://www.suttercounty.org/government/county-departments/agricultural-department>



Top Left-Red Sesbania tree at adult stage.

Bottom Left- Red Sesbania leaves.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our environment and agricultural land!

- Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner's Office

