

Agriculture Protection Board  
Advisory Leaflet No. 34  
August 1978  
Agdex No. 647  
76523/5/78-10M-L/2795

# NOOGOORA BURR



**N**oogoora burr (*Xanthium pungens*) is a serious summer growing weed which must be prevented from spreading in Western Australia. When established, it reduces pasture and crop yields, injures stock, is poisonous in the seedling stage and causes vegetable fault in wool.

Noogoora burr is an important weed because of the hooked spines on the burr. 'Fault' in wool caused by Noogoora burr increases wool processing costs and lowers returns to the grower. It reduces the value of the annual wool clip in Queensland and New South Wales by many millions of dollars.

Noogoora burr reduces production in crops such as cotton, and in pasture, by competing for moisture, nutrients and light. The weed's growth can be so dense that cattle and sheep



1 Leaves and developing burrs 2 Dry burrs 3 Noogoora burr plant.

cannot get access to watering places. Noogoora burr is a native of southern Europe and central Asia. It was first

discovered in Australia in the 1860's at Noogoora station, near Ipswich in Queensland, and was probably introduced with

cotton seed from America. There is a large infestation on the tidal flats of the Ord River in the Kimberleys. Other small outbreaks have been found in the south of the State. Noogoora burr is a declared plant (noxious weed) in Western Australia.

### Description

Noogoora burr is a summer growing annual plant, with stems up to 2.5 metres in height. Isolated plants have a branched stem, whereas plants growing in a clump are usually single stemmed. The leaves are similar in shape to those of a grapevine. They have minute bristles on the surface and teeth on the edges. The upper surface of the leaf is dark green while the under surface is pale green.

The plant flowers from December to April, but the flowers are inconspicuous.

(continued overleaf)

# **NOOGOORA BURR**

*(continued)*

They form at the base of the leaf stalks and at the end of the branches. Burrs begin to form in January, continuing until April. Noogoora burr reproduces only from seed. The seeds are brown, 6 to 12 mm long and flattened on one

side. Two seeds are produced in each burr. One of these seeds germinates in the following spring or summer and the other remains dormant for two to three years. This helps the plant survive poor seasons. Noogoora burr is well adapted for spreading. The hooked spines on the

burr tangle in wool and easily attach themselves to other animals' coats. Burrs are often spread into areas on horses' manes and tails. The infestation on the banks of the Ord River has also been spread by burrs being carried on the water. Prompt action is essential to eradicate isolated

patches of Noogoora burr to prevent the weed getting established in new areas of Western Australia.

***Suspect plants should be reported to the Agriculture Protection Board, telephone Perth 367 0111 or any country officer of the Agriculture Protection Board or Department of Agriculture.***