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Agriculture Protection Board
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KHAKI WEED



1. Mature plant 2. Seedlings 3. Burr

(continued over)

KHAKI WEED

Khaki weed (*Alternanthera repens*) is a member of the Aramanth family. It originated in Central and South America and is now found in New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. Isolated outbreaks have been observed near caravan parks and roadsides in the Kimberleys of W.A.

Significance:

Khaki weed competes with more valuable pasture plants, the burrs cause downgrading of wool and hide damage. It is suspected of poisoning cattle. The numerous spiny burrs can also be a problem in residential areas.

Ecology:

Khaki weed is a creeping perennial

spreading vegetatively and by seed. Roots often form at the nodes of the spreading stems. Seeds germinate in the spring forming a dense matt of stem and leaf growth during summer if moisture is adequate. The top growth dies off in winter and the dormant plant is sustained by the fleshy taproot. New growth occurs in spring followed by flowers and seeds. Burrs are carried by stock, vehicles and in chaff and hay.

Description:

Khaki weed is a prostrate spreading plant with trailing red-purple stems covered with short hairs. Leaves are round to oval, green with red-purple veins and short leaf stalks. It flowers in September to November. Clusters of inconspicuous white flowers are

formed in the leaf axils. The characteristic burrs are prickly khaki coloured, stemless and formed in leaf axils. Numerous burrs are formed each about 10 mm in diameter and containing several nearly square seeds about 1 mm across. The burrs are sometimes confused with Caltrop, but are a different shape.

Action is required to prevent the further spread and establishment of Khaki weed in Western Australia

For advice on identification or control, contact the Agriculture Protection Board, telephone Perth (09) 367 0111 or the nearest district office of the APB or Department of Agriculture.