

Agriculture Protection Board
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MINTWEED



1. Mature plant. 2. Infestation. 3. Flower. 4. Seedling. 5. Seeds.

MINTWEED

M^{INTWEED} (*Salvia reflexa*) also known as narrow leafed sage, lanceleafed sage, blue sage and sage-mint originated in south-eastern U.S.A. and Mexico. It was accidentally introduced to Queensland about 1900 where it became a major problem weed. It subsequently spread to north and central west New South Wales. Small infestations have been found in other states including Western Australia. It is a declared plant (noxious weed) in some of the shires of the eastern goldfields of Western Australia.

Description:

Mintweed is an erect plant about 60 cm or more in height. The stem is square like other members of the mint family. It has many branches with numerous leaves. The leaves are greyish and narrow with toothed edges. They are arranged in pairs opposite each other on the stem and branches, and vary from 2 to 5 cm in length and up to 1/2 cm in width. The flowers are small, blue to lilac in colour, and approximately bell

shaped. The petals have two lips, one narrow lip extended almost twice the length of the other. Flowers are usually formed in pairs opposite each other on slender spikes at the end of branches. The fruit consists of four pods (or nutlets), each containing one seed. When crushed the plant has a distinctive mint-like odour.

Significance:

Mintweed invades the better soils and competes with pasture plants and occasionally crops. The leaves contain a chemical which when incorporated in soil inhibits seed germination of other plants.

Stock grazing mintweed have sometimes suffered from nitrate poisoning, however, in most cases the stock which died were in poor condition and newly introduced to the weed.

Ecology:

Mintweed is a summer growing annual plant. It is adapted to occasional summer rainfall conditions; it produces large numbers of seeds; the time between germination and the formation of viable seeds may be as little

as six weeks, and up to four generations may take place in one season. It is very drought tolerant, germinating with little moisture and when wilted recuperates after very light showers. It readily invades overgrazed and badly managed pastures, particularly near sheep camps and waterpoints. The seed is spread by stock or water movement, in mud, in hay, or on farm vehicles or machinery.

Mintweed has caused many problems to cattle and sheep producers in the inland parts of the eastern states. It is important to prevent similar problems developing in Western Australia. This can be done by finding and eradicating the small areas of the weed which occur here.

For information on mintweed recognition and control contact the Agriculture Protection Board, Jarrah Road, South Perth, Western Australia 6151. Telephone (09) 367 0111 or any office of the APB or the Department of Agriculture.