Controlling Common Pokeweed

COMMON POKEWEED is a deep-rooted perennial that reproduces from buds on the root or from seeds. Aboveground shoots of this plant arise from the taproot and consist of diffusely branched, fleshy stems (resembling a small tree) that can reach heights of 6 to 8 ft under fertile conditions. In older plants the taproot can be up to 6 inches in diameter and can grow to depths of more than 12 inches. The fruit produced in late summer are clusters of green berries that turn purple to black at maturity and contain a profuse amount of red juice. The green leaves, fleshy stem, and purple berries of common pokeweed can inhibit the harvesting process and lead to discounts at the elevator for high moisture and stained seed. In addition, areas with heavy infestations of common pokeweed have been known to compete and reduce yield in both corn and soybeans. Numerous bird species are known to feed on the berries and are capable of randomly dispersing pokeweed seeds over sizeable areas. Seedlings can emerge from mid-spring through early summer. Within 5 to 9 weeks after emergence, seedlings of common pokeweed develop the taproot that is capable of regrowth (becomes perennial). New plants from seed dispersed over undisturbed sites, such as no-till crop fields, are capable of becoming more entrenched as their taproots develop.

CULTURAL CONTROL

- Common pokeweed establishment often begins in fence rows or under power lines (dispersal by birds), monitor and control pokeweed in these areas to prevent spread.

MECHANICAL CONTROL

- Common pokeweed does not become a problem in fields with intensive tillage.
- Tillage will control true seedlings within 5-6 weeks after emergence.
- After pokeweed establishment reduced tillage will only suppress common pokeweed.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

Several herbicides with residual activity are effective at controlling seedling common pokeweed. However, common pokeweed is more difficult to control once it has developed its taproot and becomes perennial. Because of the variable size of common pokeweed populations in a field, application timing is critical. For in-crop applications time herbicide applications when common pokeweed is at least 8 inches tall and preferably less than 12 inches tall. Below are effectiveness ratings for several herbicides for common pokeweed control. Refer to the herbicide labels for maximum crop height and stage application restrictions for individual herbicides.

SOYBEANS

Herbicide[a,b]	Rate	Effectiveness
Raptor + NIS + N	5 oz	Fair
Classic[c] + NIS	0.67 oz	Poor-Fair
FirstRate + NIS or COC + N	0.3 oz	Poor
STS SOYBEAN ONLY		
Synchrony XP + COC + N	0.75 oz	Fair

CORN

Herbicide[a,b]	Rate	Effectiveness
Callisto + COC + N	3 oz	**Good**
Status + NIS + N	5 oz	Fair-**Good**
Clarity	0.5 pt	Fair-**Good**
Northstar + NIS + N	5 oz	Fair-**Good**
Beacon + COC or NIS + N	0.76 oz	Fair
2,4-D amine	1 pt	Poor

ROUNDUP READY CROPS

Herbicide[a,b]	Rate	Effectiveness
glyphosate + AMS	1.13 lb a.e.	**Good**
fb.		
glyphosate + AMS *(if needed)*	1.13 lb a.e.	

NONCROP/FALLOW (FALL)[c]

Herbicide[b]	Rate	Effectiveness
glyphosate + AMS	1.5 lb a.e.	**Good-Excel.**

[a] Refer to herbicide label for maximum application heights and stages.
[b] NIS = non-ionic surfactant; COC = crop oil concentrate; N = 28% UAN or AMS (ammonium sulfate).
[c] Apply in late-September or early-October when common pokeweed is 8 to 24 inches tall, but before a frost.

Project GREEEN