

# Weed Alert!

## Bathurst Bur (*Xanthium spinosum*)

***Bathurst bur is a total control plant pest in the Marlborough District Council's Regional Pest Management Strategy. Land occupiers that suspect they have Bathurst bur on their property should notify the Marlborough District Council. Council will carry out control of Bathurst bur before plants produce seed, with the aim of eventual eradication of this plant from the region.***



This distinctive plant has woody burs which contaminate wool and are a serious threat to the New Zealand wool trade. Bathurst bur is an annual that dies down in the winter. The burs either drop to the ground, or attach themselves to humans or animals and spread to new areas.

### An unpleasant plant!



- The burs of Bathurst bur irritate the skin of shearers and break the combs of shearing machines.
- The spines of this plant are a nuisance to pickers of hand-harvested crops, and can damage the feet of stock forced to move through heavy patches of it.
- Bathurst bur competes strongly with many summer crops and acts as a host for some fungal diseases of horticultural plants.
- Seedlings are known to be poisonous to stock, especially horses and pigs but this has not been a major problem in New Zealand as yet.

### What to look for

- The small woody burs have thick, hooked prickles that cling to wool and clothing.
- Leaves are dark green on top with white midribs, and pale underneath.
- Flowers are pale green and inconspicuous.



Bathurst bur is a multi-branched annual plant that grows from a deep taproot.

The yellowish stems have 3-pronged yellow spines up to 2.5cm long at the base of each leaf.

New plants germinate in the late spring or summer, growing quickly to flower and produce burs the following autumn before dying off in the winter.

Seed can remain dormant in the soil for up to 15 years.

Many seeds will often germinate after soil disturbance such as ploughing.



## Control

- Early control is essential to prevent the formation of burs. Any plants which have burs must be removed and destroyed to ensure the burs do not germinate.
- Isolated plants should be grubbed and the entire plant destroyed by burning. Larger patches should be sprayed with a suitable herbicide before they produce seed.

## Contact us

*The Marlborough District Council requires your help in locating sites of this plant.*

*If you suspect you have Bathurst bur on your property or have seen it growing anywhere, please inform the Council.*



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