

GUIDE

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Common Names of Weeds In Missouri Field Crops

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Common weeds in field crops are known by at least two common names; some by a dozen or more. For example, *Abutilon theophrasti* may be referred to as wild cotton in southeast Missouri, while farmers in a northwest community may call it butter print. Indian mallow might be the preferred name in another locale. But if you want to use the name that will get the most nods of recognition from farmers throughout this country, call it velvetleaf. The many common names of weeds frequently creates communication problems. During a conversation, two people may refer to a plant species, but use different common names. They don't realize that they are both referring to the same plant. More importantly, this confusion can result in erroneous weed management decisions.

Weed names on herbicide labels. Some herbicide labels list both the common and scientific names of weeds controlled by the active ingredient. Others list only common names. If growers know the scientific names of weeds, there will be no difficulty in selecting the proper herbicide. However, most growers do not buy herbicides by scientific names but rather by common names. Usually one, two, or rarely three common names may be given for a weed species on a herbicide label. (See examples 1 and 2.)

The first common name listed in each case is the most frequently used common name for a particular species. Names in parentheses are less frequently used, but they are used often enough to warrant inclusion on the label.

Errors in herbicide selection. Farmers often know

Examples 1 and 2. Weed names on herbicide labels.

1. XZ Herbicide

Weeds controlled:

Scientific name

Echinochloa crusgali
Digitaria sanguinalis
Panicum dichotomiflorum
Agropyron repens
Setaria lutescens
Amaranthus retroflexus
Abutilon theophrasti

Common name

Barnyard grass (watergrass)
Large crabgrass
Panicum
Quackgrass
Yellow foxtail
Redroot pigweed
Velvetleaf (buttonweed)

2. RL Herbicide

Weeds controlled:

Scientific name

Xanthium pensylvanicum
Ipomoea hederacea
Sida spinosa
Digitaria ischaemum
Campsis radicans
Cyperus esculentus

Common name

Common cocklebur
Ivyleaf morning glory
Prickly sida (spiny sida, teaweed)
Smooth crabgrass
Trumpet creeper
Yellow nutsedge (yellow nutgrass)

weeds by names that never appear on a herbicide label. If they use the incorrect names when shopping for herbicides, they may buy an unsuitable product. For example, *Abutilon theophrasti*, velvetleaf, is also called wild cotton in southeast Missouri. A popular weed control manual, which lists most of the major herbicides along with the common names of weeds controlled, mentions only one product for control of wild cotton. The herbicide is fenuron, a weed brush killer, used to control undesirable woody plants and deep-rooted perennials. Wild cotton does appear on the product label, but in this case wild cotton refers to *Hibiscus moscheutos*, a perennial species in the same family as velvetleaf.

Several weed species may be referred to by the same common name. This leads to further confusion in herbicide selection. For example, watergrass may be used to refer to barnyardgrass, yellow nutsedge, smooth crabgrass, and large crabgrass. Selecting a herbicide to control watergrass might give good barnyardgrass (an annual) control, but control of yellow nutsedge (a perennial) may be less than expected. You can find other similar examples by comparing the list of common names used in Missouri with various herbicide labels.

Another good reason for identifying a weed by its scientific name, or at least by the most commonly used name, is that some species are more tolerant to certain herbicides. For example, within the pigweed group, a few weeds are more

difficult to control. Water hemp, which is similar to smooth pigweed, is more difficult to control. Palmer's pigweed, a southern species, has a greater tolerance to dinitroaniline herbicides. By selecting herbicides broadly labeled for pigweed control, you may get less effective control of certain species.

The information in Table 1 on common names of 44 of the most frequently observed weeds in Missouri was acquired from several sources, including a survey of common names of weeds sent to area extension specialists, botanical references, and the personal experiences of the authors. This list is intended to serve as a reference for those who make weed management decisions. It also emphasizes the importance of proper weed identification.

Summary. The common names farmers use to refer to a weed species often depend upon the area of Missouri in which they live. This can be a problem when choosing a herbicide application or some other means of weed management. Successful control depends on knowing the correct name of the weed in question. This is especially true in selecting herbicides by labels, which may list only one common name for a species. The weed names you use to select a herbicide should be the ones approved by the Weed Science Society of America or possibly the next most commonly used names.

Table 1. Common names of weeds found in Missouri field crops.

General plant group Growth habit Scientific name	Common names usually appearing on herbicide labels	Other common names used in Missouri	Common names not reported from Missouri but encountered elsewhere
Sedges			
Perennials			
<i>Cyperus esculentus</i>	Yellow nutsedge* Nutsedge Yellow nutgrass	Nutgrass Watergrass Wet weather grass	Edible galingale Chufa Rush-nut Earth-almond Nutrush Northern nutgrass Coco sedge
Grasses			
Annuals			
<i>Cenchrus longispinus</i>	Sandbur Field sandbur	Longspine sandbur* Burgrass Hedgehoggrass	Beargrass Sand-spurs Cock-spurs
<i>Digitaria ischaemum</i>	Smooth crabgrass* Crabgrass	Small crabgrass Watergrass Sloughgrass	Smooth fingergrass
<i>D. sanguinalis</i>	Large crabgrass* Hairy crabgrass Crabgrass	Watergrass Bunchgrass Fingergrass	Large hairy crabgrass Polish millet Purple crabgrass Pigeongrass Crowfoot
<i>Echinochloa</i> spp.	Barnyardgrass* Watergrass	Wild millet Cockspurgrass	Cocks-foot Panicgrass

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Grasses			
Annuals			
<i>Panicum dichotomiflorum</i>	Fall panicum* Panicgrass	Ticklegrass Greasegrass Watergrass Giant crabgrass Sprouting crabgrass	Spreading panicgrass Spreading witchgrass
<i>Setaria faberi</i>	Giant foxtail* Foxtail Millet Wild millet	Nodding foxtail	
<i>S. glauca</i>	Yellow foxtail* Foxtail Millet	Wild millet Bottlegrass Common foxtail	Yellow bristlegrass Glaucous bristly foxtail Bristlegrass Summergrass Golden foxtail
<i>S. viridis</i>	Green foxtail* Foxtail Millet	Bottlegrass	Wild millet Pigeongrass
<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>	Shattercane* Wild cane Scattercane	Black amber Amber cane	
Perennials			
<i>Agropyron repens</i>	Quackgrass* Couchgrass	Witchgrass Quickgrass Scutchgrass	Wickens Wheatgrass Doggrass Seargrass Quickens Stroil Squitch Knotgrass Devil's-grass Twitchgrass Blue-joint Pondgrass Sloughgrass Colorado bluegrass False wheat
<i>Sorghum halepense</i>	Johnsongrass*	Arabian millet Egyptian millet Means-grass	Morocco millet Evergreen millet Milletgrass Cubagrass St. Mary's-grass False Guineagrass Maiden-cane
Broad-leaved plants			
Annuals			
<i>Abutilon theophrasti</i>	Velvetleaf* Buttonweed	Cottonweed Wild cotton Butterprint Elephant ear	Indian mallow Pie maker
<i>Amaranthus hybridus</i>	Smooth pigweed* Pigweed Careless weed		Slender pigweed Wild beet Green amaranth Red amaranth Green pigweed Prince's feather

General plant group Growth habit Scientific name	Common names usually appearing on herbicide labels	Other common names used in Missouri	Common names not reported from Missouri but encountered elsewhere
Broad-leaved plants			
Annuals			
<i>A. retroflexus</i>	Redroot pigweed* Careless weed Common pigweed Pigweed	Redroot Rough pigweed Green pigweed Chinamen's greens	Wild beet Rough green pigweed Rough green amaranth
<i>A. tamariscinus</i>	Waterhemp	Hemp Pigweed Smooth pigweed White pigweed Green pigweed Careless weed	
<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>	Common ragweed*	Ragweed Kansas ragweed Hogweed	Blackweed Mayweed Wild tansy Roman wormwood Carrotweed Bitterweed Buffaloweed Kinghead
<i>A. trifida</i>	Giant ragweed*	Horseweed Great ragweed Ragweed Mule tail Horse cane	
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Lambsquarter	Common lambsquarter* Mealweed	White goosefoot Baconweed Frostbite Fat-hen Pigweed Wild spinach
<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	Sunflower*	Common sunflower Wild sunflower	Comb flower Annual sunflower
<i>Hibiscus trionum</i>	Venice mallow*	Flower-of-an-hour Shoo-fly Brown-eyed susan	Modesty Bladder katmia
<i>Ipomoea hederacea</i>	Annual morning glory Morning glory	Ivy-leaf morning glory Wild morning glory	
<i>I. lacunosa</i>	Morning glory	Small white morning glory Bindweed Little flower morning glory	Pitted morning glory
<i>I. purpurea</i>	Annual morning glory Morning glory	Tall morning glory* Wild morning glory Common morning glory	Rope-wind
<i>Kochia scoparia</i>	Kochia*	Mexican fireweed Fireweed Fireball Firebush Summer cypress Tumbleweed Pigweed	Burning-bush Broom-cypress
<i>Polygonum pensylvanicum</i>	Pennsylvania smartweed* Smartweed	Leatherleaf	Hearts-ease Purple-head Swamp smartweed Pinkweed Glandular smartweed

General plant group Growth habit Scientific name	Common names usually appearing on herbicide labels	Other common names used in Missouri	Common names not reported from Missouri but encountered elsewhere
Broad-leaved plants			
Annuals			
<i>P. persicaria</i>	Lady's thumb* Smartweed	Peach-leaved persicary Heartweed Black-heart Peach-wort	Spotted smartweed Lover's-pride
<i>Sicyos angulatus</i>	Burcucumber*	Wild cucumber Nimble Kate	Star cucumber
<i>Sida spinosa</i>	Prickly sida* Spiny sida Teaweed	Prickly mallow Thistle mallow	False mallow Indian mallow
<i>Solanum americanum</i> = <i>S. nigrum</i>	Black nightshade* Annual nightshade	American black nightshade Nightshade Deadly nightshade Poisonberry	Stubbleberry Hound's-berry
<i>Xanthium</i> spp. (not in- cluding <i>X. spinosum</i>)	Cocklebur* Common cocklebur	Bur Buttonbur Sheepbur Ditchbur	Clotbur
Perennials			
<i>Apocynum cannabinum</i>	Hemp dogbane* Dogbane	Indian hemp Hemp Bitterroot Milkweed	Wild cotton Amy-root Choctaw-root American hemp
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Common milkweed* Milkweed	Cottonweed	Wild cotton Silkweed Virginia silk
<i>Campsis radicans</i>	Trumpet creeper*	Trumpet vine Cow-itch Devil's shoelaces	Hellvine Shoestrings Cow-vine
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field bindweed* Bindweed	Small bindweed Morning glory Small morning glory Creeping Jenny Cowbind Hedge-bells	Small-flowered morning glory Green-vine Corn-lily Lap-love
<i>C. sepium</i>	Hedge bindweed* Bindweed	Bracted bindweed Wild morning glory	Devil's-vine Lily-vine Rutland-beauty Hedge-lily
<i>Cynanchum laeve</i> = <i>Ampelamus albidus</i>	Honeyvine milkweed*	Climbing milkweed Honeyvine Angle-pod Milkweed	Enslens's-vine Sand-vine Blue-vine
<i>Ipomoea pandurata</i>	Bigroot morning glory* Wild sweet potato	Wild potato vine Man-of-the-earth	
<i>Physalis heterophylla</i>	Groundcherry	Clammy groundcherry* Husk tomato	
<i>P. subglabrata</i>	Groundcherry	Smooth groundcherry* Chinese lantern Lanternweed Husk tomato	Bladdercherry
<i>Polygonum coccineum</i>	Swamp smartweed* Tanweed	Smartweed Water smartweed Devil's shoestring	Shoestring Shoestring tanweed

General plant group Growth habit Scientific name	Common names usually appearing on herbicide labels	Other common names used in Missouri	Common names not reported from Missouri but encountered elsewhere
Broad-leaved plants			
Perennials			
<i>Rumex altissimus</i>	Dock	Pale dock* Tall dock	Smooth dock
<i>R. crispus</i>	Curly dock*	Curled dock Sour dock Dock	Narrow dock Yellow dock
<i>Solanum carolinense</i>	Horsenettle*	Bullnettle Carolina horsenettle Sandbrier Stickerweed	Wild tomato Tread-softly Apple-of-Sodom

*Common names, which appear in the list of standardized names of weeds, are published by the Weed Science Society of America to provide consistency in the use of common weed names.