

lambsquarters

Chenopodium album L.

Synonyms: None

Other common names: common lambsquarters, lambsquarters goosefoot, pigweed, white goosefoot,

Family: Chenopodiaceae

Invasiveness Rank: 37 The invasiveness rank is calculated based on a species' ecological impacts, biological attributes, distribution, and response to control measures. The ranks are scaled from 0 to 100, with 0 representing a plant that poses no threat to native ecosystems and 100 representing a plant that poses a major threat to native ecosystems.

Description

Lambsquarters is an extremely variable, annual plant that grows between 15 cm and 1 meter tall. Stems are blue-green, branched, grooved, and blotched with red or purple. Leaves are alternate, simple, green above, and mealy-white below. They can be triangular, diamond-shaped, or lanceolate. Flowers are minute and are arranged in densely clustered panicles. Lambsquarters blooms from June to September. Flowers are wind-pollinated.



Chenopodium album L.

Similar species: Lambsquarters can be distinguished from other *Chenopodium* species in Alaska by its combination of smooth seeds and broad, green leaves.

Ecological Impact

Impact on community composition, structure, and interactions: Lambsquarters has not been observed in undisturbed areas in Alaska. In other regions, it has little or no effect on native plant communities. This species has been reported to be poisonous to sheep and pigs. It is an alternate host for a number of viral diseases that infect barley, beet, potato, turnip, and tobacco.

Impact on ecosystem processes: It is unlikely that lambsquarters causes any measurable impacts to ecosystem processes.

Biology and Invasive Potential

Reproductive potential: Lambsquarters reproduces by seeds only. Each plant can produce over 500,000 seeds. Seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to 40 years (Royer and Dickinson 1999).

Role of disturbance in establishment: In Alaska, lambsquarters colonizes disturbed areas and is present for only one to three years unless the site is repeatedly disturbed (Densmore et al. 2001). Buried seeds can germinate on sites that have been re-disturbed several decades after the last human disturbance.

Potential for long-distance dispersal: Seeds can be transported by wind but lack morphological adaptations for wind and animal dispersal.

Potential to be spread by human activity: Lambsquarters can contaminate grass and cereal seed. It can also spread as a contaminant of topsoil and horticultural stock (Hodkinson and Thompson 1997).

Germination requirements: Seeds must be in the top 2½ cm of soil to germinate.

Growth requirements: Lambsquarters grows rapidly and requires moderate soil moisture. It grows best on disturbed, highly organic soil.

Congeneric weeds: Oakleaf goosefoot (*Chenopodium glaucum*) is considered a noxious weed in Quebec (Invaders 2010, USDA 2010).

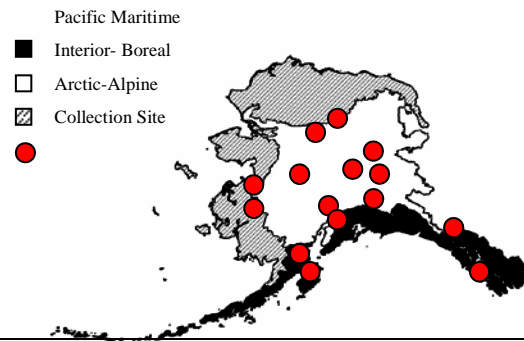
Legal Listings

- Has not been declared noxious
- Listed noxious in Alaska
- Listed noxious by other states (MN; listed as a weed in FL, KY, NE)
- Federal noxious weed
- Listed noxious in Canada or other countries (MB, QC)

Distribution and Abundance

Lambsquarters is a common weed of cultivated fields and recently disturbed areas throughout Canada and the United States. It also grows in eroded areas of overgrazed rangelands, brush burns, river bottoms, logged forest openings, desert grasslands, pinyon-juniper woodlands, and yellow pine forests in Arizona.

Native and current distribution: Lambsquarters is native to Europe (Parker 1990, Densmore et al. 2001). It has been introduced to Africa, North America, South America, Australia, Hawaii, Greenland, and Norway. Lambsquarters has been documented from all three ecoregions of Alaska (Hultén 1968, AKEPIC 2010, UAM 2010).



Distribution of lambsquarters in Alaska

Management

Lambsquarters can be controlled by mechanical and chemical methods. It is strongly resistant to many common herbicides. No information was found on the availability of biological control agents.

References:

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