

SERICEA LESPEDEZA



DESCRIPTION

Sericea lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata* (Dum. Cours.) G. Don) is a shrubby-looking perennial forb, two to five feet tall with many stems branching from a stout, woody, branched taproot. It is native to Asia. The leaves, each with three one-quarter to one-inch long leaflets, are crowded along the stems. The leaflets are wedge or club shaped. Two types of flowers are produced individually or in small clusters along the stems: showy, mostly cross-pollinated flowers are one-quarter inch long and cream-colored with purple markings; self-pollinated flowers are smaller and less showy. Fruits from both types of flowers are tan to brown one-seeded pods one-eighth to one-quarter inch long. Flowering occurs from August until frost, and fruiting occurs from September until frost.

PREVENTION OF SPREAD

The Kansas Noxious Weed Law (K.S.A. 2-1313a et. seq.) requires all landowners to control the spread of and to eradicate sericea lespedeza on all lands owned or supervised by them. Methods used for control must both prevent the production of viable seed and destroy the plant's ability to reproduce by vegetative means. Infestation sites must be monitored after control methods have been implemented to ensure that dormant seeds in the seedbank do not germinate and establish new infestations.

SERICEA LESPEDEZA CONTROL PRACTICES

Sericea lespedeza control means that both the roots and the flowers must be destroyed. Because sericea lespedeza is a perennial, two or more of the control methods listed below must be used together to control sericea lespedeza, with the exception that herbicide applications may be used alone as a control.

Cultural Control

Cultural weed control involves land and vegetation management techniques used to prevent the establishment or control the spread of noxious weeds.

Grazing by sheep or goats may be used as a control for sericea lespedeza on young plants early in the season. Two or more treatments each season and repeat grazing each year are necessary to deplete the seedbank and provide control.

For grasslands infested with sericea lespedeza, controlled burning in late August through September will kill the above-ground portion of the plant, including flowers and seeds, which are produced at that time of year, and prevent the plants from reproducing sexually. It will also encourage seed in the seedbank to germinate. Juvenile plants are susceptible to winter kill.

Frequent surveys of fence lines, roadways, ditches, and other susceptible areas for new infestations and the timely removal of any new plants will prevent sericea lespedeza from becoming established.

Mechanical Control

Mechanical weed control involves the physical removal of all parts or just the reproductive parts of weeds.

As a perennial species, sericea lespedeza is difficult to control mechanically. Repeated mowing in the flower bud stage should reduce the plant's vigor, but this method of control is not as effective as late season burning because the mown plants are not removed and the soil is not heated, which allows dormant seeds in the seedbank to germinate.

Chemical Control

The herbicides listed below may be used for cost-share with landowners to control sericea lespedeza. Other products labeled and registered for use on this noxious weed in Kansas may be used in accordance with label directions but are not available for cost-share. Be sure to follow all label directions and precautions. For additional information, consult the most recent edition of the Kansas State University publication of "Chemical Weed Control for Field Crops, Pastures, Rangeland, and Noncropland."

Any two or more of the herbicides listed below may be available for cost-share as a pre-mix or a tank mix if allowed on the respective labels. Contact your county weed program for availability.

Switching often between herbicides with different modes of action is highly recommended.

Herbicide	Mode of Action
aminopyralid	4
chlorsulfuron	2
fluroxypyr	4
metsulfuron methyl	2
picloram	4
triclopyr	4

Biological Control

Biological control refers to the deliberate application of a living organism to control the spread of weeds. These agents will not eradicate their host plant; therefore, other control methods must be used in addition to the use of biological control agents as part of an integrated pest management strategy. The importation of biological control agents is regulated by USDA-APHIS and is allowed by permit only.

There are no biological control agents available for sericea lespedeza.