

Spiny sowthistle

Sonchus asper L.

Sunflower Family

Key identifying traits

- ❑ Leaves are a bluish-green color
- ❑ Plants usually grow from 1-5' tall
- ❑ Lower leaves are lobed and toothed and have spiny margins
- ❑ Plants contain a milky sap
- ❑ Flowers are yellow and resemble dandelions
- ❑ Mature seeds have a white feathery pappus that collectively form a white "puff ball"
- ❑ Stem leaves are very prickly and clasp the stem



Biology and ecology

- An annual or winter annual spreading by seeds
- It grows in landscapes, winter small grains, pastures, hay fields, orchards, and roadsides
- This plant was introduced from Europe and now can be found almost everywhere throughout the U.S.



Control

Prevention - Learn to identify plants; start monitoring early in the season

Biological - No known biological control in our area

Cultural - Plant competitive grass or other cover crop

Mechanical - Tilling and mowing are effective control if done before flowering occurs.

Chemical - Spiny sowthistle is susceptible to many herbicides: refer to the [PNW Weed Management handbook](#) for specific chemical recommendations. Herbicides should be applied as soon as the plant is actively growing in the spring.

Where found - Scattered throughout Stevens County but usually not a problem except in grain crops, gardens or landscape areas.



All Photos Richard Old, XID Services, Inc.