

Weekly Ag Report
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Hey, Lassen County this is the weekly Ag Report, and I am Tom Getts with UC Cooperative Extension. Today I am going to talk about tall whitetop, as now is the best time to get out and control it. Tall whitetop is also known as perennial pepperweed, or *Lepidium latifolium* if you like Latin.

It is a beautiful flower, but nasty weed, on California's B list. Plants only make the state noxious weed list when they can cause damage to agricultural production and the environment. Tall whitetop can spread, taking over pastures, ag fields, and natural areas crowding out more desirable vegetation. Tall whitetop can cause displacement of vegetation which is more palatable to livestock, or vegetation which can support wildlife!

Whenever facing a weed it is important to understand how it reproduces, so that you can keep it from spreading. Tall whitetop, being a **rhizomatous perennial**, is the most difficult, as it can spread from seed or by creeping roots.

Most weeds are easy to kill right after they germinate from seed and are only a few inches tall. But tall whitetop seedlings are very hard to notice amongst other vegetation. You typically don't see tall whitetop until it has become established, and sent up large white flower stalks 3-4 feet tall. These large white flowers give the plants it's common name. By the time you have multiple stems and flowers, the plant has developed a root system, a root system that can allow the plant to spread rapidly and re-sprout after the top of the plant is removed. Getting after the roots are what really makes tall whitetop control quite challenging.

So how do you get rid of this nasty plant? Cultivation can control the aboveground growth but can chop up roots spreading an infestation throughout a field. Mowing alone can suppress the aboveground growth, but will not get rid of the plants unless combined with systemic herbicides. Systemic herbicides are products that can be absorbed by the plants and move throughout the plant, including the roots.

Most of the research, which has been successful in controlling tall whitetop, has been focused on systemic herbicides, and like many plants, tall whitetop is more susceptible at a specific growth stage. Many weeds are best controlled in the spring when the plants are small, but this is not the best time to target tall whitetop. Research has shown tall whitetop in the bud stage is most susceptible to systemic herbicide application. At the bud stage, the plant has utilized many of the sugars stored in the roots to grow the aboveground leaves and stems, and it is hypothesized that this reduction in sugars down in the roots makes the plant at its weakest.

Tall white top is rapidly approaching the bud stage of growth throughout the region, so consider carving out some time to treat it before it puts on the big showy flowers. Do it for your livestock, or do it for your neighbor, now is the time to kill some tall whitetop!

If you have specific questions about herbicide use or tall whitetop control you can visit the UC Integrated Pest Management website for more information <http://ipm.ucanr.edu>, or give me a call at 251-2650. Remember when using any pesticide read and follow the entire label, because the label is the law!