



Invasive Species Management Plans for Florida

Wedelia

Wedelia trilobata syn. *Sphagneticola trilobata* (L)

Asteraceae

INTRODUCTION

Wedelia is a common weed problem in many parts of Florida. Introduced from tropical America, wedelia has been used in the landscape as a groundcover. People like wedelia because of its beautiful flowers and its fast growth habit. Quick to form a thick groundcover, wedelia is a Category II invasive in Florida. It is also considered a serious weed in agricultural settings in other countries.

DESCRIPTION

Wedelia is a mat forming perennial herb with rounded stems. Leaves are fleshy, usually 2 to 4 inches long and 1 to 5 inches wide, with irregularly toothed margins. Flowers are solitary, one inch in diameter and yellow-orange in color. New plants arise from nodes that root at the soil surface. Seed production is low and generally does not reproduce prolifically via seed. However, wedelia is able to escape from gardens to nearby areas via runners and fragmentation.

IMPACTS

Wedelia typically invades agricultural areas, along roadsides and trails, along streams, waste places, and disturbed sites. A dense thicket of vegetation forms which crowds out native and other plant species. This prevents regeneration and growth of desired species.

MANAGEMENT

Preventative: The first step in preventative control of wedelia is to limit the planting and removal of existing plants within the landscape. Take care when dumping vegetation to prevent the regeneration and spread.

Cultural: Plant native or non-invasive alternatives.

Mechanical: Mowing or slashing of wedelia infested areas should be avoided. This may cause the development of new plants. Uproot the weed from the areas where it

grows, followed by an application of glyphosate on the infested area. The sites will need to be rechecked to insure that it has been successfully eradicated, and sprays applied to the whole site when any plants are found. Young seedlings and small plants may be hand pulled, but be sure to remove roots and rhizomes.

Biological: *Wedelia* spp. has no known biological control agents.

Chemical: Small patches may be treated with a 2% solution of glyphosate while large, dense populations may require a 5% solution. Follow-up treatments should be conducted as needed. Triclopyr at 1-2% is also effective.

REFERENCES AND USEFUL LINKS:

Floridata Homepage: <http://www.floridata.com>

University of Florida Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants:
<http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/welcome.html>

University of Florida's Cooperative Extension Electronic Data Information Source:
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/index.html>

Langeland, K.A. and K. Craddock Burks. 1998. Identification and Biology of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas. IFAS Publication SP 257. University of Florida, Gainesville. 165 pp.

The Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group. Weeds Gone Wild: Alien Plant Invaders of Natural Areas: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/index.htm>

Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk (PIER). Plant Threats to Pacific Ecosystems:
<http://www.hear.org/pier/threats.htm>

Invasive Plants of the Eastern United States: <http://www.invasive.org>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Plants Database: <http://plants.usda.gov>

Mature Plant

- Mat-forming perennial herb
- Rounded stems
- Spread via runners and fragmentation
- Stems root at the nodes



Leaves

- Leaves are arranged oppositely
- 2 to 4 inches long
- Irregularly toothed margins



Flowers

- Large solitary flowers, one inch in diameter
- Yellow to orange in color
- Very low seed production – not considered a means of spread

