

Longspine sandbur

Cenchrus longispinus

Grass Family

Key identifying traits

- ❑ Warm-season grass growing horizontally or upright to 3'
- ❑ 1-3" seed spikes have 10-30 pea size hard burs
- ❑ Burs are thickly set with stiff, sharp, spreading spines
- ❑ Leaf blades and leaf sheaths are flat in appearance; immature plants spread horizontally
- ❑ Frequently, old burs can be found clinging to a root of young plants which aids in distinguishing immature sandbur from other grasses

Biology and ecology

- Summer annual that favors sandy or well-drained gravelly soils; thrives on sunny sites
- Invades lawns, roadsides, ornamental, disturbed areas
- Flowering and seed production July to September
- Mature burs cause injury to livestock mouths, noses and eyes and can reduce value of wool
- Commonly spread by animals, machinery and vehicles; burs cling to tires, clothing, soles and laces of shoes, knees, knuckles and pet hair

Control

Prevention - Learn to identify the plant; know your property; beware of fill dirt, hay and seed from outside your area

Biological - None

Cultural - Competitive vegetation helps-keep lawns watered and fertilized to increase the vigor of turf and reduce open spaces

Mechanical - Mowing can stop seed production in short term, but plants can regrow and bloom shorter than the cutting blade; digging or pulling is effective; needs to be before bloom or, if after, bag or burn plants in a pile as appropriate; seed bank will be present for years

Chemical - Pre-emergence treatments are effective at label rates prior to germination but effectiveness can be lost due to leaching from rain or irrigation; post-emergence spot treatment with a non-selective glyphosate product is effective but care must be used to avoid loss of desirable plants.

Broadleaf herbicides are not effective.

Where found – Limited infestations found in the sandy bench areas of Stevens County above Lake Roosevelt, particularly west of Kettle Falls.



seedling with the bur attached to root—a good ID for young plants



mature plant with ripe burs



burs newly emerged