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To: Rains County Leader

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Every summer, I have received a bunch of calls from homeowners asking about sticker weeds in their yards. What they have is called carpet burweed or lawn burweed. Over the past two years this burweed has invaded many home lawns. Today, I am going to explain a little bit about it and hopefully you will be able to get rid of this common nuisance.

Carpet burweed or lawn burweed (*Soliva* spp.), a cool season annual introduced from South America, has become a nuisance on golf courses, athletic fields, parks and lawns throughout much of Texas and the Southwest. The weed becomes a real nuisance when the seed matures in the spring because the sharply pointed spines on the seed can easily pierce the skin. Burweed becomes a deterrent to the use of athletic fields, parks and playgrounds in the spring when the seed mature.

Description: Burweed is a small, low-growing annual plant. In an un-mowed site, it only reaches 2 inches in height and the individual plants may spread out to about 6 inches in diameter. Leaves are pinnately divided giving the plant a feathery appearance. The seed enclosures are flattened, callous structures terminating in teeth on spines.

Burweed emerges in early fall and matures in the spring. The vegetative part of the plant dries up in May and the seeds remain to germinate the next fall. Populations of the weed may become so high that plants cover the ground like a carpet-thus, the name "carpet burweed." Where grassy weeds such as annual bluegrass are eliminated by the use of pre-emerge herbicides, populations of burweed increase dramatically in following years.

Control: Like most broadleaf weeds, burweed is easily controlled in the seedling stage with hormone-type herbicides. Products containing 2,4-D, MCPP and dicamba will control burweed in the seedling stage.

Pre-emerge herbicides are generally not effective for burweed control. In fact, burweed populations increase where pre-emerge herbicides reduce the competition. Simazine and atrazine are exceptions in that they effectively control carpet burweed.

There several different chemicals on the market to control all types of weeds. Before you go out to your local garden center to pick up some weed killer, do your homework. Some weed killers will be only labeled for Bermuda Grass while others can only be used on turf such as St. Augustine, Centipede, Zoysia grass, etc....Please be sure to read the label to find out specific uses.

Always follow label directions for a product, and observe all warnings and precautions relative to safety of the application. Herbicide labels should be carefully reviewed for additional details on specific uses of each product.