



## A Northern Nevada Homeowner's Guide to Identifying and Managing Common Lambsquarters

Susan Donaldson, Water Quality and Weed Specialist

Wendy Hanson Mazet, Master Gardener Program Coordinator and Horticulturist

**Other common names:** Lambsquarters, poor man's spinach, white goosefoot, white pigweed, wild spinach, mealweed, others

**Scientific name:** *Chenopodium album*

**Family:** Chenopodiaceae

**Description:** Common lambsquarters is a common weed that grows a ground-hugging rosette form sometimes tinged with purple, and then grows into a bushy plant up to 5 feet tall. It blooms during the summer. While often considered edible, it can accumulate chemicals called oxalates that can be toxic if enough is eaten.

**Leaves:** Light greenish-gray alternately attached leaves are triangular or goosefoot-shaped. The top is usually covered in a whitish powdery substance, and the underside is whitish. Lower leaves are larger and upper leaves are smaller.

**Stems:** Branched; sometimes have purplish-red stripes and grooves.

**Flowers:** Small and greenish-gray with no petals; found at the tips of the main stem and branches and in leaf axils (see photo page 2).

**Roots:** Grows a taproot with fibrous lateral roots.

**Native to:** Europe

**Where it grows:** Roadsides, pastures, gardens, landscaped areas and other disturbed sites.

**Life cycle:** Summer annual



Typical plant growing in a disturbed site.



Note the whitish powdery substance on the seedling leaves.

(Top photo by S. Donaldson,  
bottom photo by W. Hanson Mazet)

**Reproduction:** Reproduces by seed; prolific seed producer

**Control methods:** Common lambsquarters is best controlled when young. This can be difficult, as seeds may continue to sprout throughout the summer.

**Mechanical:** Dig, hoe or pull young plants.

Plants usually don't survive mowing or clipping.

**Cultural:** Plant desirable vegetation to help suppress the lambsquarters. Corn gluten meal has been shown to help reduce survival of sprouting seeds.

**Biological:** None commercially available.

**Chemical:** Try broadleaf selective herbicides such as 2,4-D and dicamba on young plants, or use glyphosate (nonselective). Dicamba can persist for several months and may damage desirable plants in the area treated. Pre-emergence herbicides can be used to manage existing seed banks.

## References:

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- USDA-NRCS Plants Database. 2011. PLANTS profile for *Chenopodium album*, <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=CHAL7>.
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The small, greenish flowers are difficult to see and occur in clusters in the leaf axils.

(Photo by W. Hanson Mazet)



The leaves are spear-shaped and covered with a whitish substance.

(Photo by S. Donaldson)