

## A Northern Nevada Homeowner's Guide to Identifying and Managing Poverty Sumpweed

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**Other common names:** Povertyweed, bozzleweed, death-weed, salt sage, small-flowered marsh elder

**Scientific name:** *Iva axillaris*

**Family:** Asteraceae

**Description:** Poverty sumpweed grows to 2 feet tall in large colonies in disturbed sites. The leaves have a strong odor most people find unpleasant. When touched, the foliage can cause contact dermatitis in sensitive people.

**Leaves:** Grayish-green, lobed and covered with short, bristly hairs. Oppositely attached to the stem toward the bottom of the plant, and alternately attached above.

**Stems:** Gray-green, bristly, upright and branched.

**Flowers:** Produces greenish male and female flowers on the same plant during the summer. Male flowers hang or nod at the ends of branches. Female flowers are spiny and are found in the leaf axils.

**Roots:** Grows deep, woody creeping roots.

**Native to:** Western North America

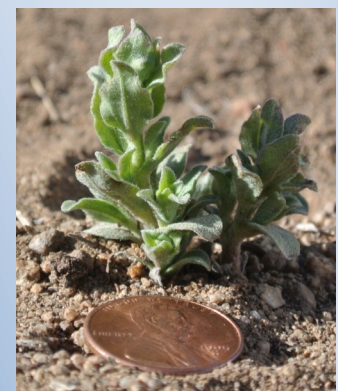
**Where it grows:** Salt marshes, alkali plains, roadsides and pastures, and sites disturbed by cultivation or overgrazing

**Life cycle:** Perennial (lives longer than two years)

**Reproduction:** Reproduces by creeping roots and seed



Typical plant growing in a disturbed site.



Plants can sprout from dormant roots after long periods. Seedlings are uncommon.

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

**Control methods:** Poverty sumpweed can be difficult to control due to its deep, spreading root system. As with all perennials, the roots must be killed to effectively control this plant.

**Mechanical:** Cultivation may spread root fragments and is not recommended. Hand pulling is difficult and may cause allergic symptoms in people; wear gloves and pull regrowth frequently. Mowing is not effective, as plants regrow.

**Cultural:** Plant desirable vegetation to help suppress it.

**Biological:** No biological controls are commercially available. Livestock do not find it palatable, and it may be toxic to livestock when eaten.

**Chemical:** Try broadleaf-selective herbicides such as 2,4-D or 2,4-D + dicamba on actively growing plants. Dicamba can persist for several months and may damage desirable plants in the area treated. Glyphosate is not recommended.

### References:

- Calif. Dept. of Food and Agriculture. 2012. Iva genus, <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/ipc/weedinfo/iva-axillaris.htm>
- DiTomaso, J.M. and E.A. Healy. 2007. Weeds of California and Other Western States. University of California Publication 3488.
- UC Berkeley Jepson Manual. 2012. Iva axillaris, [http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/cgi-bin/get\\_JM\\_treatment.pl?609,1459,0,1461](http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/cgi-bin/get_JM_treatment.pl?609,1459,0,1461).
- USDA-NRCS Plants Database. 2012. PLANTS profile for Iva axillaris, <http://plants.usda.gov/java/nameSearch?keywordquery=iva+axillaris&mode=sciname&submit.x=15&submit.y=0>.
- Whitson, Tom D. (editor). 2009. Weeds of the West, 10th edition. University of Wyoming, Jackson, Wyoming.



The flower clusters occur where the leaves meet the stem.



The leaves are oval and attach directly to the stems.

(Photos by W. Hanson Mazet)