

**The Enemy:** Common cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium* L.)

**Strategy:** This North American annual plant grows up to 4 foot tall. Unlike Common burdock, Cocklebur, has much smaller and rough leaves, which are attached to a thick purplish-green stem with distinct purple to black spots. The plant produces a purple flower which turns into a woody seed (that floats) of which have spines with two hooks on their tips which allow it transport on most furry animals that pass by. Each hook contains a seed, one germinates in the spring and one in the fall. The plant will usually remain erect all winter long, thus disseminating seeds throughout the winter.

**Attack:** This plant can be found on disturbed sites, abandoned lands, run-downs sandy pastures, and roadsides. This plant can be found in layers on the Snake River Reservoirs as the water layers recede the floating seeds pile up in lateral lines along the reservoirs. The seeds can devalue wool prices when they get caught-up in the fur of the animal. The seeds and seedlings are both toxic to livestock. We generally find this weed growing in riparian areas as this is the area the animals travel for water and rub the seeds off with the brush.

**Defense:** As this is an annual, mechanical control can be an effective means of controlling it. Simply make sure that you get at least two inches of the root out of the ground. Minimizing soil disturbance during this activity will keep the weed from re-invading. Herbicides such as Escort XP (1 oz/ac), Opensight (3.3oz/ac), Milestone (7 oz/ac), and Tordon 22k (1qt/ac) are quite effective in pastures and on roadsides. Opensight and Milestone can both be used up to the water edge on any creek, stream, river, or lake. Applications should be any time prior to plants getting to the bud stage.