

**The Enemy:** Blue Mustard (*Chorispora tenella*)

**Strategy:** This is an annual mustard that grows very early in the year. This plant germinates in the late fall or late winter. It grows to a height of 12 inches. Once it matures it produces purple flowers ( Don't ask me why it's called Blue mustard) with 4 pedals (as with all plants in the mustard family). Each plant produces hundreds of seeds that form in a long pea looking pod that hangs from the plant and opens up by splitting into two shells to expose the seed.

**Attack:** Since this plant grows early in the year it gets a jump-start on the other plants for the needed moisture and nutrients. It usually invades disturbed areas and grows thick enough to be a carpet of purple flowers. It is also a problem for dry-land grain growers and has been known to taint the milk of dairy cows. Once the plant dies it continues to shade germinating seeds of desirable plants. It has also been known to cause fires as it dries off in the early summer.

**Defense:** Annual plants are very easy to control; the problem is that there is usually lots of them. Early disking will kill the plant, but new seeds may germinate after you plant your desirable species. Livestock will eat it, until the grasses emerge, then they will forage on the grasses and let the mustards grow. 2,4-D is good early, and then a light application of Sulfonyleurea herbicides (Escort XP, Telar XP3.09.2021, Harmony xtra, etc) will literally 'smoke' the weeds for the season. Roundup will be weak unless you put the 2,4-D in with it, but only do this if you are going to reseed the site. As with bur buttercup this is the first broadleaf weeds that we see in the early spring, get control of them early so they will not bother you in the early summer.