



Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 901 W. Smith Road Bellingham WA 98226
(360) 354-3990 www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/weeds

CLEAVERS

Galium aparine

THREAT: Cleavers, also called annual or catchweed bedstraw, is known for its habit of clinging to fur and clothing. It is most likely a native of North America, and is also native to Europe and Asia. The entire plant is covered with tiny, bristly hairs, which allows it to cling to passing animals and people, aiding in its dispersal. Cleavers grows in a wide range of areas, including open forest, meadows, beaches, roadsides and disturbed areas. A single plant can produce up to 400 seeds.

DESCRIPTION: Cleavers is an herbaceous, taprooted annual. It grows in a semi-upright or sprawling manner, climbing over and through other low vegetation. The stems are four-sided and can grow up to 6 feet long. The leaves are long and narrow, $\frac{3}{4}$ to 3 inches long, and grow in whorls of 6-8, around the stem. It has very small white or greenish flowers and blooms from April to July. The fruits are small round green burrs, and, like the entire plant, cling to passing animals and people.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Cleavers can be controlled through manual and chemical methods. Small infestations can be hand-pulled. Repeated tillage can also be used to control cleavers. Care should be taken when moving equipment or animals from infested areas, to prevent the movement of seeds and plants. Contact the weed board for site-specific chemical recommendations.

