

Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*)

CAUTION/POISONOUS

Description

It is a taprooted herbaceous perennial plant that grows as a summer annual in colder climates. The stems radiate from the crown to a diameter of about 10 cm to over 1 m, often branching. They are usually prostrate, forming flat patches, though they may grow more upwards in shade or among taller plants. The leaves are pinnately compound with leaflets less than 6 mm (a quarter-inch) long. The flowers are 4–10 mm wide, with five lemon-yellow petals. A week after each flower blooms, it is followed by a fruit that easily falls apart into four or five single-seeded nutlets. The nutlets or "seeds" are hard and bear two to three sharp spines, 10 mm long and 4–6 mm broad point-to-point. CAUTION: These nutlets strikingly resemble goats' or bulls' heads; the "horns" are sharp enough to puncture bicycle tires and to cause painful injury to bare feet. *Tribulus terrestris* has a toxic effect in sheep.



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Key Identifiers

- ✓ Spreading along ground to form dense mats
- ✓ Leaves are hairy and divided into 4-8 oval leaflet pairs
- ✓ Yellow, five-petal flowers, open in mornings
- ✓ Green to reddish brown stems
- ✓ Sharp-pointed fruits
- ✓ Spiny seeds break into sections when mature

Location in Canada

In Canada, puncturevine has been reported in British Columbia and Ontario. Alberta has no known reports.

Resources

<http://www.weedsbc.ca/pdf/GuidetoWeeds.pdf>

http://www.sosips.ca/FACTSHEET_PV_FINAL_Jul%202010.pdf

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=TRTE>

Similar species

Cinquefoil (*Potentilla* spp.) flowers may look similar but leaves will quickly differentiate species.