

## **WILD RADISH IN SMALL GRAINS**

Wild radish is the most common and problematic weed infesting wheat and other small grains in Georgia. As a winter annual, wild radishes germinate during the fall months when soil temperatures drop below 65 degrees. After emergence, wild radish forms a rosette of leaves throughout the winter and early spring. It will remain in the rosette stage for most of the winter until spring at which time the bolting phase occurs. Bolting is when the weed begins to flower and produce seed. The flowers are generally yellow, but occasionally white.

The first step in controlling wild radish is prevention. This can be achieved through cleaning equipment such as tractors and drills and the use of certified seed. However, once wild radish has established itself, a couple of years of chemical treatment may be necessary to eliminate the problem.

Eliminating the “first flush” of wild radish seedlings before the grain emerges will reduce the plants to a more manageable level.

Mowing would be beneficial, but wild radish does not begin to bolt until the grain begins to joint. It would be an acceptable method for control in a grazing or cover crop situation but not for grain.

The most common method of control is chemical. Phenoxy-type materials (2,4-D) provide excellent control for wild radish and wild turnip but can cause severe injury if applied during certain stages of grain growth and development. Phenoxy applications should be made at the two to three tiller to full tiller stage because that is the time when the cereal grain is undergoing little growth. Although some “rat-tailing” may occur, damage will generally be minimal. Furthermore, weed size is a factor - the smaller the weeds, the better the control. Managing wild radish in small grains depends on several factors. Timing of control measures to account for the growth stage of the grain and size of the weed may be difficult at best. However, if left untreated, quality and yields will be affected as well as creating a larger infestation and potential problem for next year.

The mention of trade names does not imply endorsement or criticism of similar ones not mentioned.

For more information on weed control in small grains, contact the Pierce County Extension Service at 449-2034.