



Kochia

O & T Guide W-10

Frank Sholedice, Research Associate &
Mark Renz, Extension Weed Scientist



Cooperative Extension Service • College of Agriculture and Home Economics • October 2006

Kochia, *Kochia scoparia*, is a non-native erect summer annual that has slender leaves (often with long hairs), small flowers, and five-lobed fruit. Kochia can be toxic to livestock when it makes up 50% or more of their diet. It is also known as fireweed, Mexican burningbush, morenita, poor man's alfalfa, and summer cypress.

The plant can grow to about 3-6 ft. tall, and its height and leaf shape can vary dramatically based on precipitation. It has erect stems with some branching; the stems sometimes have reddish streaking. The leaves are narrow or lance-shaped, 0.2-2.3 in. long and 0.05-0.50 in. wide, flat, green to gray-green in color, and have smooth edges. The leaves are mostly alternate but may grow in groups or clusters. Leaves and stems are often covered with short or long hairs.



The flowers are very small and inconspicuous and are found in small clusters at the leaf axils. There are normally five tiny flowers per cluster. Individual flowers are 0.04-0.08 in. wide, heart or spade shaped, and may be green, white, pink, or red in color. Kochia produces a deep taproot (up to 6 ft.) with fibrous, branched horizontal roots that can spread over wide areas (up to 9 ft.). It reproduces through seed only.



Management:

- Physical removal before seed production is effective
- Cultivation before seed production is effective
- Herbicides are effective

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator. NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.