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Waterhemp's Big, Bad Brother is Back This Spring

Meaghan J. B. Anderson

Iowa State University, mjanders@iastate.edu

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Abstract

Palmer amaranth has been confirmed in five Iowa counties over the last two summers. The only (known) infestation in Muscatine County is on a very sandy soil near the Cedar River, and most emerged seedlings had at least four true leaves on May 4, 2015. This particular infestation has been intensively managed for just over a year, resulting in a significant decrease in its presence at the farm. This is very encouraging that with early discovery and good management, eradication may be possible.

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Waterhemp's Big, Bad Brother is Back This Spring

By Meaghan Anderson, ISU Extension Field Agronomist, East Central Iowa

Palmer amaranth has been confirmed in five Iowa counties over the last two summers. The only (known) infestation in Muscatine County is on a very sandy soil near the Cedar River, and most emerged seedlings had at least four true leaves on May 4, 2015. This particular infestation has been intensively managed for just over a year, resulting in a significant decrease in its presence at the farm. This is very encouraging that with early discovery and good management, eradication may be possible.



Photo. Two Muscatine Co. Palmer amaranth seedlings with at least four true leaves on May 4, 2015.

While the seedlings in this picture appear quite distinctive with their long petioles and round leaves, we would not suggest that identification of a population at this seedling stage is easy or even possible. The presence of Palmer amaranth in this area previously gives us confidence that the seedlings seen on May 4 are Palmer amaranth and not another of the many *Amaranthus* species present in the state. The Palmer amaranth in this field is much larger than waterhemp observed in other fields.

When scouting for Palmer amaranth, key vegetative characteristics to look for would be a lack of hairs on stems, ovate-shaped leaves, and the presence of petioles longer than the leaf blades. Bob Hartzler, Iowa State Extension Weed Scientist, has put together a number of materials to assist in Palmer amaranth identification that can be found at this link:

<http://www.weeds.iastate.edu/mgmt/2014/PAresources.html>.

Many other *Amaranthus* species are present in Iowa, including redroot

