



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/puddleboy/2699595505/>

POKEWEED

Identificating Features

- Pokeweeds are herbs growing from 1 to 10 ft tall, although specimens as tall as 14 ft have been observed.
- They have single alternate leaves, pointed at the end, with crinkled edges.
- The stems are often pink or red.
- The flowers are greenish-white, in long clusters at the ends of the stems.
- They develop into dark purple berries.

Spread

Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*) is a poisonous plant native to the southeastern U.S. and was introduced to the northwest by birds because they are immune to the poisons in the plant and are the major cause of plants spread throughout the northwest. Pokeweed grows from the crown of the thick fleshy root, but reproduces only by seed.

Locations

Currently the plants has spread across the entire country but prefers cool damp climates. Numerous spotings have been reported all over the Portland area.

Usually, it grows in rich pasture lands, in recently cleared areas, along fencerows, and in waste places and open spots in woodlands.

Pokeweed is found from Maine to Minnesota and southward, and is fairly common in southern and southeastern Iowa.

Pros

- Pokeweed berries yield a red ink or dye
- Treats inflammations and rashes of the breast
- Was valued by native American healers as a blood purifier, fever reducer, and pain killer.



Cons

- All parts of pokeweed are toxic
- Invasive Species
- May cause severe stomach cramping, nausea with persistent diarrhea and vomiting

Control

Control of common pokeweed is typically not easy because of the large fleshy crown and associated taproot. Except in some row-crop situations, pokeweed rarely infests large areas and is usually found in isolated instances.

Removal of individual plants is accomplished by wholly removing the crown and a major portion of the associated taproot.



<http://henrypowderly.com/2009/09/pokeweed-the-pretty-pest/>

Alternatively, spot applications of glyphosate or products containing 2,4-D or dicamba can severely injure or kill the plant.

Intresting Facts

- The lingering cultural significance of Poke salad can be found in the 1969 hit song "Polk Salad Annie," written and performed by Elvis Presley.
- In the campaign of James K. Polk, the 11th US president, the leaves were reportedly worn by his supporters, and was therefore called Polkweed.

Refrences

- <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ag254>
- wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokeweed