# Parthenium weed

*Parthenium hysterophorus* Arama-kuba; arama-sorgo; biyabassa; chebchabe; dayessa; faramsissa; kalignole; qinche; terekabi

## Prevention

- Purchase certified crop seed and animal feed to reduce the chance of contamination
- As seeds can travel on animals and machinery, do not allow animals into an affected area, limit machinery use in the area and keep machinery clean to prevent spread
- Keep crop healthy to maximize competitiveness - use optimal water and fertilizer levels
- Grow plants that will outcompete the weed, such as *Cassia* spp. (e.g. *C. tora*, *C. uniflora*, *C. occidentalis*) and *Tagetes* spp. (e.g. *T. erecta*)
- Organic mulch, such as rice straw mulch, and inorganic mulch, such as woven polypropylene groundcovers, can generally help control weeds
- For pasture, encourage good grass coverage since grass can outcompete the weed. Limit the amount of grazing in a particular area:
  - Supply multiple watering points to prevent livestock congregating
  - Rotate livestock between paddocks
  - Fence-off areas becoming overgrazed

## Monitoring

- Fast-maturing annual (sometimes perennial) herb, top half very brachied when mature, 1-2.5 m tall
- Leaves: pale green, deeply lobed, hairy, up to 2 mm long
- Seeds: black, two thin white scales, 2 mm long
- Flower heads: small, creamy-white, slightly hairy, grow on stem tips, 4-10 mm; consist of multiple florets (small flowers); five-pointed
- Soon after germination, it forms a rosette of pale green, young, strongly divided leaves, 8-20 cm in length, 4-8 cm in width
- As it matures, the stem elongates and becomes woody. Leaves are smaller, narrower and less dissected
- Can be confused with ragweeds (*Ambrosia* spp.) which have small, greenish flower heads and upright stems that are branched at the base and grow in large clumps

## Direct Control

- Do not hand-pull. If handling the weed wear gloves and long-sleeved clothes since parthenium is toxic
- A combination of methods will be required to control the weed. Carry these out before the weed flowers or sets seed to prevent spread:
  - Plough the land at least 5 cm deep to inhibit seed survival
  - Cut the weed at ground level - this is only a temporary measure. The weed will grow back unless the roots are removed
  - Burn the weeds when plants are dry (if permitted in your country)
  - Once the weed is cleared, encourage growth of competitive plants (see prevention) to keep the parthenium population low
  - Use established biocontrol agents if available in your country, such as *Zygogramma bicolorata*, *Piblema strenuana*, *Listronotus setosipennis*, and *Smicronyx lutulentus*. Some rust species, such as *Puccinia abrupta*, also damage the weed
- Control measures may need to be repeated over a long period since seed can stay in the soil seed bank for years

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Note: Pesticides may be available to control this pest. Please check with the Ministry of Agriculture in your country to find out which pesticides are registered in your country and the local restrictions for their use.

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**CREATED/UPDATED:** March 2017  
**PRODUCED BY:** Plantwise