

Portulaca oleracea

Recognize the problem

Family: Portulacaceae (purslane family).

Common names: Purslane.

Local names: Gatumia (Kiswahili), Obwanda (Lutoro, Lunyoro).

Annual or perennial broadleaved herbaceous succulent plant; stems are fleshy, purplish-red to green, forming mats; plant with taproot.

Leaves: Bright green, fleshy (40-60 mm x 15-25 mm) and arranged alternately along the stem.

Flowers: Yellow with 5 petals (3-10 x 2-8 mm) grouped at the end of the stem and open only in sunshine.

Fruits: Capsules which split to release the seeds for dispersal.

Seeds: Red or brown when immature and black when mature (0.6-1 mm long). A single plant may produce up to 240,000 seeds, which may germinate even after 5 to 40 years.

Background

Origin: Unknown.

Introduction: Contaminant of crop seed.

Habitat: Temperate to subtropical (-tropical) regions; grows best under warm conditions, endures periods of limited water availability.

Spread: By seeds with wind and water.

Invades: Many field crops including asparagus, red beets, celery, crucifers, cotton, maize, onions, potatoes, rice, soya beans, sugarcane, tomatoes and wheat; also found in wasteland, eroded slopes, bluffs and riverbanks.

Impacts: Seeds germinate rapidly following tillage and the weed competes for resources with young crop plants. It can reduce yields by 20-40%, depending on crop. Purslane can act as a reservoir for crop diseases, particularly those caused by nematodes and some viruses.

Portulaca oleracea. (Photo by Russ Kleinman)



Portulaca oleracea seeds. (Photo by discoverlife.org)



Scientific name(s) > *Portulaca oleracea*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



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