

Bidens pilosa

Recognize the problem

Family: Asteraceae (daisy family).

Common names: blackjack, beggar's tick, broom stick, cobbler's pegs, Spanish needle.

Chichewa: Chisoso, Kanzota; **French:** Herbe aigue, Piquant noir; **Kinyarwanda:** Inyabarasanya; **Luganda:** Sere; **Acholi:** Laabika; **Langi:** Ononot; **Lugosa:** Kalaala.

Annual or evergreen broadleaved erect herb (up to 1 m tall) with a strong taproot. Stems hairless, four-angled, purplish green in colour, simple or branched.

Leaves: Green, compound with 3–5 leaflets each; leaflet shape variable but usually egg-shaped with a broader and rounded base tapering towards the end to spear-shaped (3–7 (–10) cm long and 1–2 (–5) cm wide); leaf margins with forward-pointing sharp projections or teeth, terminal leaflet always larger than lateral (side) ones.

Flowers: White petals, centre yellow (7–8 mm wide), usually borne singly on stalks (1 cm long).

Seeds: Black, slender (1–1.5 cm long), ribbed, dry, one-seeded, 2–4 yellowish barbed bristles or awns at terminal end; long viability if buried below soil surface.

Background

Origin: Latin America.

Introduction: Accidentally as a contaminant, as ornament, for agriculture and for medicinal use.

Habitat: Humid-wet tropical regions.

Spread: By humans, animals, wind and water. It has been reported as a rice crop seed contaminant.

Invades: Crops, plantations, pasture, disturbed land, wastelands, fallow land, gardens, drainage ditches, forest edges/gaps, riversides, gullies, roadsides and railway lines.

Impacts: The weed is known to significantly reduce crop yields. Densities of eight blackjack plants per square metre in soybean fields reduced yields by 43%. Dry bean harvests in Uganda and Peru were reduced by 48% and 18–48%, respectively, as a result of the presence of *B. pilosa*. In Southeast Asia this weed is problematic for those growing cabbage, pineapple, guava and plantation crops. *Bidens pilosa* is also a host to and vector of harmful parasites such as root knot nematodes and tomato spotted wilt virus. The large number of seeds, together with its negative impact on the growth of neighbouring plants, allows the species to form dense stands rapidly, displacing crops and native vegetation.

Scientific name(s) > *Bidens pilosa*

Flowers have white petals and yellow centres. (Photo by Arne Witt, CABI)



Leaves have 3-5 leaflets each, tapering towards the end. (Photo by Arne Witt, CABI)



The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



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