

# Cuscuta campestris

## Recognize the problem

Family: Convolvulaceae (morning glory family).

Common names: dodder, golden dodder, field dodder.

Amharic: Yenoug anbessa.

Annual parasitic plant without green colour, often sprawling over other plants without contact with the soil; after the seedling stage always associated with host plants; stems wiry, yellow to pale orange, and wrapped around host stems on which it relies for its nutrition.

Leaves: Tiny, reduced to leafy scales, or absent.

Flowers: White, in clusters of 3-8, each ca. 2 mm in diameter. There are five petals, joined at the base.

Fruits: Light-brown round capsule, 2-3 mm in diameter.

Seeds: Five per fruit; irregular to oval in shape, rough-surfaced, about 1 mm across.

## Background

Origin: Unknown, thought to be native to the Americas.

Introduction: As contaminant in crop seeds and fodder.

Habitat: Tropical, sub-tropical and temperate regions; most common in temperate conditions; mainly associated with disturbed vegetation, in particular cropped land.

Spread: By seed, primarily as contaminants in seed or fodder; by livestock through attaching to the hide of animals and by humans.

Invades: Has a very wide host range, crops primarily affected are niger seed and lucerne; other crops incidentally as a result of parasitism of weeds occurring in the crop field.

Impacts: Dodder is a parasitic plant causing a serious drain on the metabolic resources of the host. The damage to infected hosts can be severe, to the extent of total crop loss. Impacts have been documented on lucerne, clovers and other fabaceous crops (>50%), sugar beet (40%), tomatoes, Chrysanthemum and niger seed, green gram, sesamum and black gram (25-80%). Further economic loss occurs when crop produce, intended for export, is rejected or has to be cleaned expensively.

Dodder on host. (Photo by © Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org)



Dodder flowers and stem. (Photo by © Wikipedia)



Scientific name(s) > *Cuscuta campestris*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



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