

Prickly Lettuce



**GROW & GIVE
WEEDS**

Lactuca serriola



Prickly lettuce seedling/rosette.

Photo: Ohio State Weed Lab, Bugwood.org.

In Colorado, prickly lettuce can exist as a summer annual (germinates in spring and then sets seed and dies in late summer/fall) or a winter annual (germinates in the fall, lives through the winter as a basal rosette, and then sets seed and dies in late spring/early summer).



Flowering prickly lettuce.

Photo: Ohio State Weed Lab, Bugwood.org.

Although related to the lettuce we eat, prickly lettuce is a common weed found in disturbed habitats. Key defining characteristics of prickly lettuce are the presence of milky sap, spiny bristles underneath the midrib, and serrated/lobed leaf margins.



Mature prickly lettuce.

Photo: Bruce Ackley, Ohio State University, Bugwood.org.

Whether a summer or winter annual, prickly lettuce reproduces by seed only. Yellow flowers develop into white plumes, allowing seeds to easily disperse by wind. Hand-pulling the whole plant before seed maturation is an effective management option. Post-emergent herbicides, such as those containing 2,4-D, dicamba, or MCPA, can be applied during the rosette stage.

For more information on Growing and Giving, go to growandgivecolorado.org

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