

Field Bindweed



Field bindweed is a long-lived perennial which produces a dense ground cover. It can spread by seed or root. Field bindweed has a deep root system that competes with crop plants for water and nutrients. Vines climb on plants and shade crops, cause lodging of small grains, and make harvesting difficult by clogging machinery. Dense field bindweed infestations may reduce crop yields by 50 to 60 percent. Land infested with field bindweed is reduced in value.

The twining stems vary from 1.5 to 6 feet or more in length. Leaf size and shape are variable, but generally the leaves are 1 to 2 inches long, smooth and shaped like an arrowhead. Flowers are funnel-shaped, about 1 inch diameter, and white or pink in color. The flower stalk has two small bracts located below the flower. The bracts, along with leaf shape and smaller flower size, distinguish field bindweed from hedge bindweed. Seeds of field bindweed are dark, brownish gray, and about 1/8 inch long. They are borne in two-celled, egg-shaped capsules which contain two seeds per cell. It produces numerous seed in growing seasons with high temperatures and low rainfall and humidity.



The root system of field bindweed is extensive. Roots of established plants may extend 20 to 30 feet laterally and develop an extensive underground network. Depth of rooting depends on soil type and rainfall. Buds along the root system can send up shoots that start new plants. The root system contains a large quantity of carbohydrates that provide energy for both above and below ground plant growth.

The best control of field bindweed is obtained with a combination of cultivation, selective herbicides, and competitive crops. Roundup can be effective in helping renovate infested fields.