

Rocky Mountain Beeplant

Scientific Name: *Cleome serrulata* Pursh

Life Span: Annual



Rocky Mountain Beeplant is an erect, branched annual in the Caper family that grows to 2 to 4' tall. It is in flower from July to August, and reproduces from seed. Flowers are about 1/2 inch long and atop long pedicels. The flower has 4 attractive petals, and the stamens are longer than the flowers, giving the spikes a fuzzy appearance. Dozens of bright, pink to purplish flowers are crowded into rounded or rather elongate spikes. Fruit is a narrow capsule up to 2 inches long that bears several to several dark, ovoid seeds.

Leaves are in groups of three's on long petioles. The margins may be entire or have very small teeth. A tall stem surrounded with short narrow 3-lobed leaves. It is often found in wastelands, and in lower mountains. It is frost tender. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. Rocky Mountain Beeplant is often found on sandy soil. It prefers light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils and requires well-drained soil. The plant can survive in a range of soil pH levels.

Rocky Mountain Beeplant has little to no value as forage for livestock and wildlife. Animals rarely feed on this plant because of its disagreeable taste and odor. Nitrate poisoning can result if too much is consumed. However, it is considered to have value as a pollinator and is often used in seed mixes to assist in reclaiming disturbed sites.

County Impact: Beeplant is scattered throughout Johnson County rangelands, seems to be more prevalent on reclaimed sites or roadsides; however, generally not in heavy concentrations. It does not seem to be overly invasive and tends to be cyclic in nature when it does occur.

Control: Control is best prior to flower emergence using a combination of broadleaf herbicides such as Weedmaster and Escort. Consult the District for specific recommendations. Pulling is very effective pre-flower, and mowing generally is not effective.

