

Wild licorice



Wild licorice is perennial from long, tough taproots and interconnected root crowns. Plants are hairless. They may grow three feet tall, usually are about 18 inches tall. Leaves are pinnate (arranged like two combs set back-to-back) and up to eight inches long. Each leaf bears 7-21 leaflets up to 1 1/2 inches long that have small scales when young. The scales soon change into sticky, resinous dots. About 10-20 pale, whitish-yellow flowers about 1/2 inch long are grouped into spikes about 2-3 inches long that arise in the middle and upper branches.



Look for wild licorice during May to August in rich soil areas in native prairie near wetlands or coulee bottoms. Grazing seems to have little effect on the density of this plant. It is grazed by cattle, but not preferred and will increase under grazing as competing plants are grazed off. It has light green to white flowers in the spring which ripen in the fall to clusters of burs which contain pods of small bean like seeds. The seeds are enclosed in dark brown pods equipped with hooked prickles like the cocklebur.

There are no known bio-agents at this time. Some broadleaf herbicides are effective at controlling this weed but proper selection and application is critical because of where it commonly grows. Please consult the District for specific recommendations.