

Yellow nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*)



Photo credit: J.M. DiTomaso



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Photo Credit: P. Alexander

Key ID Tips

- Flowers form at the end of the stem in clusters.
- Three leaf-like bracts below the flowers.
- Tubers form in the roots.
- Seeds are brown and ellipsoidal.

Origin
Tłoh'gaí

Origin
Native to Europe

Description

Yellow nutsedge is a perennial sedge with stiff, thick leaves that are arranged in sets of three at the base. Stems are triangular and appear bright green to yellow-green. Flowers form at the end of the stem and have three leaf-like bracts at the base. Flower are a clustered spikelet that appear yellow to brown. Seeds are brown and ellipsoidal. Below ground they develop small round tubers that allow for vegetative spread.



Photo credit: D. Doohan, OSU

Biology

Yellow nutsedge is perennial sedge that grows in moist soils but can tolerate drought, making them long-lived. They can also grow in cultivated areas. Their tubers increase their rooting depth and allow it form new plants. They also grow as part of a network or thin rhizomes, which can make removal difficult. Plants die back in the fall and re-emerge in the spring. Their fast growth and upright growing habit allow them to overtop native plants and grasses.

Locations

No populations have been documented on the Navajo Nation.

Ecological Threat and Management Concerns

Yellow nutsedge is most problematic in riparian areas, irrigation agricultural fields, and wetlands as they can replace native species. It can grow quickly and their tubers allow them to resprout and develop new clusters, especially in disturbed sites. Once established, they are difficult to control.

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Additional safety measures and limitations may apply to each method. Refer to the [Navajo Nation Integrated Weed Management Plan](#) for more information.

Mechanical/Manual Removal

Hand pulling seedlings and small plants can reduce establishment for small populations. Plants should be removed before they have 5 to 6 leaves to limit tuber production and resprouting. Repeat treatments are needed for established populations as tubers can resprout more than 3 times before being depleted. Hoeing, digging, and tilling must be at a depth of at least 8 to 14 inches. However, tilling can spread infestations by moving tubers to new locations.

Biological

No biological control organisms are available for use on the Navajo Nation.

Cultural Control

Grazing is not recommended or effective for controlling nutsedge as it will not address the tubers. It is unknown whether fire is an effective control method and thus is not recommended. . Mulching, reducing irrigation, and blocking fabrics can be effective at limiting and reducing nutsedge growth.

Chemical

Use of herbicides can be effective. Refer to the product labels for application rates, timing, and approved application methods.

Recommended herbicides include:

- Glyphosate

References

USDA, NRCS. 2023. PLANTS Database. Available at <https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/>. National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA.

Wilén, C.A., M.E. McGiffen, C.L. Elmore. 2010. Pest Notes: Nutsedge. University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program: Agriculture and Natural Resources. Publication No. 7432.



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