

POLK COUNTY GRAZIER

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An eNewsletter brought to you by the Rich Mountain Conservation District



PERILLA MINT IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE COMMON IN PASTURES, CAUSING CONCERN FOR SOME

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Why is Perilla Mint an Issue?

Controlling weeds in pastures and hayfields seems like a constant task at hand. Not only do you have to battle weed control in the summer, but you also must battle winter weeds as well. The result of not controlling weeds in pastures can lead to a higher density of weeds than desired forage species which results in a loss of grass production and quality. With that being said, not only do you have to control these weeds, you also need to be able to identify toxic weeds that can result in death of your cattle.



Concern

Usually, livestock do not normally consume Perilla Mint, also known as Purple Mint, but poisoning can occur when more desirable plants are in short supply. After consumption, livestock can develop symptoms related to respiratory distress such as acute inflammation of the lungs, causing fatality in some. Perilla Mint thrives in late summer, when pastures are frequently dry, and forage is more scarce – which can lead to an increase in consumption.



Identification

Perilla Mint is an annual weed prevalent in pastures, more so found along wood lines in shaded areas or barn lots. It can be easily identified by its ribbed, square stems and broad leaves. The leaves vary from green to purple, especially when found growing in the shade. When mature the plants emit a distinctive minty odor. It comes to bloom from July to October and is especially toxic to animals when in bloom.

Control

The optimum time to scout for and control Perilla Mint is during the spring to early summer months when the plants are still small and actively growing. Mowing Perilla Mint plants before seed is produced will help prevent further reproduction and spread. As an annual, it can be removed mechanically by taking advantage of its shallow root system. Once they come to bloom, the plants become hardy and more difficult to control. It is more difficult to control in the late summer and early fall when it becomes more toxic to livestock. The University of Arkansas Extension Service recommends applying a herbicide such as 2,4-D in the early spring months or Grazon P+D in late May to early June.



Other Plants Toxic to Livestock and Common to this Area:

- **Johnsongrass**—can be toxic under certain weather conditions such as after a frost
- **Bitterweed**—most toxic when flowering
- **Black Cherry**—a common tree that can fall and provide access to the toxic leaves
- **Nightshade**—also called horse-nettle, the berries are the most toxic part of plant



FREE

Free copies of the Forage Crop Pocket Guide are available at the Rich Mountain Conservation District office in Mena. The 57 page booklets are sponsored by Union Bank of Mena, First Financial Bank, Diamond Bank, & Farm Credit of Western Arkansas. These have great information and topics included are:

- ⇒ Plant Characteristics
- ⇒ Fertilizer and Nutrients
- ⇒ Stand Establishment
- ⇒ Animals
- ⇒ Grazing
- ⇒ Forage Quality
- ⇒ Hay and Silage

Upcoming Grazing Meetings and Seminars:

- ⇒ **August 17, 2021— Benefits of Soil Microbial Activity in Pastures (1PM—online seminar)** you are invited to attend the weekly grazing training sessions by Jeremy Huff, the USDA/NRCS state grazing specialist. He offers these training sessions as a Zoom meeting and the instructions for logging in are included in attached flyer. If you have the Zoom app on your phone you can just scan the QR code on the flyer. If you want to see it on your computer there is a link included in the attachment. There are sessions normally every Tuesday at 1pm so [see the attached flyer](#).
- ⇒ **August 24, 2021— Bermudagrass Demonstration—Establish or Manage? (1PM—online seminar)** next week's online training by Jeremy Huff. [see the attached flyer](#)
- ⇒ **August 24, 2021— Demystifying Regenerative Grazing and Soil Health (10AM-3PM—online seminar)** The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) will host a two-part workshop in August for ag professionals, educators and mentor farmers to provide information and hands-on training on regenerative grazing, soil health, and monitoring. NCAT soil and livestock specialists will be joined by Dr. Allen Williams of Understanding Ag, LLC. to lead these workshops. Click here for more information and to [register](#).

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Take a picture with your cell phone to visit the RMCD website →

Did you Know?

- ⇒ Cattle show symptoms of Perilla Mint poisoning very quickly with death typically occurring in 1-2 days. It is most toxic and of greatest risk when flowering in August and September.

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