



Field bindweed

A highly invasive perennial vine with deep roots and trumpet-shaped flowers, notorious for its persistence and difficulty to eradicate.

Identification and Biology

Field bindweed is a perennial herbaceous vine in the morning glory family (Convolvulaceae), native to Europe and Asia but now widespread globally . It grows 0.5–2 meters (1.6–6.6 ft) long, often creeping along the ground or climbing other plants. Leaves are arrow-shaped, 2–5 cm long, with a flat base and pointed tip, and flowers are trumpet-shaped, white to pale pink, 1–2.5 cm in diameter . The plant reproduces via seeds and extensive underground rhizomes, with roots reaching 10–20 feet deep and lateral roots spreading widely . Seeds can remain viable in soil for decades, making eradication challenging .

Ecological and Agricultural Impact

Field bindweed is considered a major agricultural weed, reducing crop yields by 20–80% due to competition for nutrients, water, and light . It can harbor plant viruses and is toxic to horses. Its aggressive growth allows it to overtake gardens, lawns, and croplands, often forming dense mats that smother other vegetation .

Control and Management

Eradicating field bindweed requires persistent, multi-season strategies:

Manual removal: Pulling or mowing is largely ineffective alone, as even small root fragments can regenerate . Digging is most effective in late spring, when root carbohydrate reserves are lowest .

Chemical control: Herbicides can be used, but must target the root system and may require repeated applications over several seasons .

Cultural practices: Maintaining healthy, competitive crops or groundcover can suppress bindweed growth. Avoid disturbing soil in autumn, as this can spread root fragments .

Persistence: Complete eradication often takes multiple years, combining mechanical, chemical, and cultural methods .

Summary

Field bindweed is a stubborn, invasive vine with deep roots and long-lived seeds, making it one of the most difficult weeds to control. Effective management requires understanding its biology, consistent removal efforts, and long-term planning to prevent re-growth and protect crops or gardens