



Washington  
State Department of  
Agriculture

# PEST ALERT

**Common name: Palmer amaranth**

**Latin name: *Amaranthus palmeri***

## Description:

Two separate detections of Palmer amaranth have been confirmed in Washington: Spokane County (150-200 plants) and Walla Walla County (two plants).

Palmer amaranth is an annual plant native to the arid southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. It is adapted to desert conditions and will germinate, grow rapidly, and produce abundant seed when water is available.

Palmer amaranth commonly reaches heights of 6-8 feet but can reach 10 feet or more. The hairless, green leaves are arranged in an alternate pattern, growing symmetrically around the stem. The leaves are oval to diamond-shaped and can have a white V-shaped marking. There is a small, sharp spine at the leaf tip. Unlike some other amaranth/pigweeds, there are separate male and female plants.

Here are ways to identify this weed:

- Redroot and smooth pigweeds have fine hairs on their stems and leaves while Palmer amaranth does not have these hairs. Powell's amaranth has sparsely hairy stems.
- The petiole (stalk connecting a leaf to the stem) is longer than the leaf length. For Powell's amaranth, the petiole is typically equal to or shorter than the length of the leaf.
- Seedhead spikes on female Palmer amaranth plants are much longer (up to three feet long).

Palmer amaranth developed resistance to multiple classes of herbicides and their different modes of action, making it challenging to control. It is causing extensive corn and soybean crop losses in many areas where it is established in the Midwest.

## Photos:



## Learn more

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### Reporting sightings

Contact your county's noxious weed control board:  
[nwcb.wa.gov/contact-your-county-weed-boards](http://nwcb.wa.gov/contact-your-county-weed-boards)

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