

Nebraska Weed Control Association

To Encourage and Develop Better Weed Control Practices in Nebraska

FACT SHEET: *Sericea Lespedeza* (*Lespedeza cuneata* G. Don)



In order to protect Nebraska's economy and the quality of its land, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture designated sericea lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata* G. Don) as a noxious weed in Nebraska on April 1, 2013.

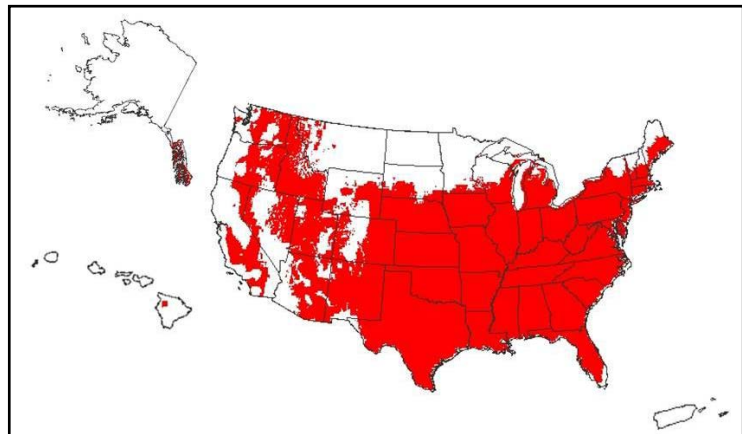
Spread Potential

Sericea lespedeza is present and considered invasive or weedy in 31 states — it is already a noxious weed in Kansas and Colorado. It was first introduced into the United States in 1896, and the oldest listing of it on Nebraska record is 1974 in Richardson County. *Sericea lespedeza* has already spread to at least eight counties in the southeast part of the state. Initial use as a hay crop facilitated its spread throughout the eastern United States. It is also readily spread by wildlife and livestock.

Impact Potential

Sericea lespedeza is a long-lived perennial forb that grows well in grasslands, pastures, along roadsides, drainage areas, fencerows and other disturbed areas. *Sericea lespedeza* is an extremely aggressive invader of open areas. Dense monocultures of thickets are formed due to its ability to sprout from root crowns.

Established *sericea lespedeza* plants will reduce or eliminate competing vegetation and restrict the amount of light reaching other plants. Its tall, upright growth with multiple branches and dense foliage produces heavy shading. Originally introduced as a forage plant, *sericea lespedeza* out-competes native grasses thus reducing the carrying capacity of livestock because it is not palatable to most livestock. In a mixture with grass, it usually becomes the dominant species after three to four years. In natural areas, these stands can become so dense that native plants are reduced. It also produces



Predicted distribution of *sericea lespedeza* in the United States

chemicals, such as tannins, that can inhibit the growth of other plants and promote the formation of pure stands of sericea lespedeza.

Seed production rates of 150 million to 300 million seeds per acre were reported for cultivated stands and there are reports that 1,500 seeds can be produced on a single sericea lespedeza stem. It readily escapes from cultivation into native grasslands and agricultural areas, and can seriously impact pastures and natural areas.



Risk Potential

The Nebraska Invasive Species Council (NISC) recently completed the Weed Risk Assessment (WRA) of sericea lespedeza. The WRA is a scientific study used to identify the potential risk of spread in Nebraska. The results showed sericea lespedeza had a **very high risk** to invade almost **98% of land in Nebraska**. When compared with more than 200 other assessments, **sericea lespedeza ranked among top high-risk plants based upon its reported impact and ability to establish and spread**. The addition of this species to the noxious weed list requiring control by landowners will aid in efforts preventing its spread beyond southeastern Nebraska.



We need everyone's cooperation

Everyone's cooperation is needed in spotting & preventing new infestations as well as taking actions needed to assure eradication with follow-up to prevent re-establishment. This early vigilance and action will prevent the potential harm and huge cost of controlling large established stands of sericea lespedeza.

*Making sericea lespedeza a noxious weed statewide allows County Weed Authorities to educate landowners on how to identify sericea lespedeza, make them better prepared to spot new infestations and eliminate small infestations before they become widespread. **If you do NOT have sericea lespedeza, you don't want it and are encouraged to aggressively scout for new infestations. If you already have sericea lespedeza, you wouldn't want it to spread to your neighbors and should diligently work to eradicate it.***

For more information visit www.neweed.org