

# Stop Goatheads in their tracks!

## Prevent pain and suffering: Pull puncturevine plants and clean up goatheads.

### The Danger

Goatheads stick to bike tires, stroller tires balls, dog's paws, fur, clothing, shoes, and bare feet. Ouch!

After puncturing and embedding into these items, they travel with you, ending up on sidewalks, trails, yards, garages, and indoors on floors and carpets.

### The Plants

Puncturevine plants (*Tribulus terrestris*) often creep over the edge, shoulders and cracks of sidewalks, trails, driveways and park strips. They grow best in hard-packed dirt, gravel, and in cracks. They are less common in turf and well-mulched areas.

The plants lie low to the ground, with fleshy stems radiating out from the center. They have leaflets with multiple leaves and small yellow flowers about 1/4" in diameter. The stems have sharp thorns, too.

**BEWARE of  
GOATHEADS!**



### Stopping the spread

First, prevent seeds from spreading. Many times people don't notice the plants until the seeds are there. When removing the seeds and plants, be careful to remove the whole plant and roots, and pick up all seeds left behind.

Second, prevent new plants from growing and seeding. The plants can be controlled by herbicides, weevils, or weeding, but once they have seeded, the only solution is removing the whole plant and seeds. The plants typically seed from July to October. It is never too late in the season to pull them.

Check online or with Urban Livability for tips on effectively removing puncturevine so it doesn't return. It may take several years, but it is worth it!

Goatheads are the spiny seedpods of puncturevine that have dried out into hard burrs. These are seeds that can germinate all summer long and can be viable for 10 years. Seeds can't be killed by herbicides or pre-emergents. The solution is preventing plants from seeding and keeping seeds from migrating to new areas.

# How to weed Puncturevine (Goatheads)



Puncturevine are pernicious weeds that spread dangerous seeds (goatheads).

Seeds puncture bike tires, dog's paws, shoes and bare feet. They keep many people from biking and recreating.

Help stop these seeds from spreading!

## Tools

- Heavy duty gloves (thick leather because both the stems and the seeds have thorns)
- Heavy duty garbage bags
- Hand tools (weed popper, dandelion digger or small shovel plus pruning shears)

## Preparation

- Aim to weed out the puncturevine plants before they develop seeds. Seeds typically start developing in July and start falling off in August. But it is never too late to remove the plants and seeds.
- Water a day in advance if possible to soften the soil to help the roots come out easily.

## Weeding

Check for seeds on the plant. If there are no seeds,

- Use hand weeder or shovel to pull out entire plant and root.
- Dispose immediately in the bag. Do not set down on ground in case there are hidden seeds.

**NO SEEDS LEFT BEHIND!**

If there are seeds,

- DO NOT yank on plants. This will cause the goatheads to fall onto the soil, ready to re-seed.
- Weed slowly and carefully. Use hand weeder to pull out entire plant if seeds are hanging on.
- If the seeds are falling off, use pruners to clip off each branch and dispose immediately in the bag and then dig the root out.
- If there is a large mat of plants together, fold the plant onto itself. Expose the central root, cut it off, slide a garbage bag over the top and flip it over. Then dig the root out.
- Dispose immediately in the bag. Do not set down on ground or in a pile. This will spread the seeds.

## Cleanup

- Clean all seeds off the ground. Pick them up, sweep the area, or vacuum with a shop vac.
- Check your shoes before you leave the area. Pick out any goatheads stuck to you and throw them out.

Thank you for keeping South Salt Lake safe, clean and beautiful.