

# MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release  
July 25, 2008

## **New Program Wages War on Invasive Plant**

This summer, the South Okanagan-Similkameen Invasive Plant Society (SOSIPS) is introducing a new invasive plant program to get a handle on puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*), one of the more invasive species in the Okanagan-Similkameen.

Puncturevine is most prolific in the sandy soils around Oliver, Osoyoos and Keremeos, with isolated patches in the Penticton area, Kelowna and as far north as Vernon.

"This invasive plant has already impacted our region's tourism industry by invading the beaches in Osoyoos and many popular biking routes, and more recently it's having an economic impact on our agricultural industry as it moves into ground crops and vineyards," says Lisa Scott, SOSIPS project coordinator. "Its invasive nature and harmful effects have earned it a classification of regionally noxious by the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands."

While SOSIPS has waged war against this weed for close to a decade, a generous financial boost of \$10,000 from the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. (IAF) will significantly assist management efforts this year.

With the funding from IAF, SOSIPS will be implementing a three-pronged approach to deal with this troublesome invader, centering around outreach, education and action. Two workshops for members of the agricultural community will be held on July 29 in Keremeos and July 30 in Oliver. These field days will focus on puncturevine and other invasive plants, identifying agricultural practices that contribute to weed spread and providing recommendations to reduce these impacts.

A new poster will be produced and educational materials already in existence will be updated and translated into Punjabi in an effort to reach more people in the region. A summer youth worker has been hired to assist with confirmation of sightings and distribution of outreach materials. Additionally, demonstration plots have been established with the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, to determine various options for controlling puncturevine.

"Unknowingly, landowners commonly contribute to the spread of puncturevine when seedpods penetrate the tires of trucks, ATVs and farm equipment," adds Scott. "It is important to recognize puncturevine at an early stage of growth, as this is when it can most easily be controlled. That's where this program can help."

Without effective coordinated control in all impacted sectors, puncturevine will continue to spread beyond its existing boundaries. SOSIPS intends to prevent further spread of puncturevine and to partner with landowners of the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys to take action. It is hoped that these efforts will help to reduce economic losses to agriculture and tourism in the Okanagan-Similkameen.

To find out more information about the puncturevine management program or to register for the upcoming workshops, contact Lisa Scott at [sosips@shaw.ca](mailto:sosips@shaw.ca) or phone 250.404.0115. To learn more about IAF and the funding programs it delivers in support of innovative projects for the benefit of B.C.'s agriculture and agri-food industries, visit [www.iafbc.ca](http://www.iafbc.ca).

For more detailed information on puncturevine, check out SOSIPS fact sheet available at the Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen office at 101 Martin Street in Penticton, or go to the Regional District

website [www.rdos.bc.ca](http://www.rdos.bc.ca) and scroll down to Invasive Plants under the 'services' section or visit the provincial government's "Weeds BC" site at <http://www.weedsbc.ca/>.

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Backgrounder attached. Puncturevine photos available on request.

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS PRESS RELEASE, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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# Backgrounder

## Puncturevine in the Okanagan-Similkameen

Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*) was first recorded in Canada from a site in Osoyoos in the 1970s. Since then, there has been considerable movement of puncturevine onto agricultural lands, where it grows between rows of ground crops such as tomatoes, melons and strawberries, or competes with newly planted grape vines. The weed is most commonly found growing in dense mats along road shoulders, vacant lots, beaches and unpaved parking sites, with stems reaching up to 3 metres (10 feet) in length. The stems are covered by hairy leaves that are divided into six to eight leaflets. Tiny, yellow flowers first appear in late spring or early summer, and spiny seedpods emerge a few weeks later. Each seedpod consists of 5 sections that break into tack-like structures with stiff, sharp spines for which this weed is aptly named. These thorny seedpods stick painfully in bare feet and puncture bicycle tires, reducing the recreational potential of many areas.

Puncturevine has a high potential for continued spread along roadways and through agricultural activities. It can be spread when seedpods get transported in the tires of trucks, ATVs and farm equipment.

One of the greatest challenges this weed poses is its ability to germinate throughout the summer months; therefore, one treatment at the beginning of summer is not enough. Landowners must be vigilant, checking puncturevine prone sites approximately every three weeks, starting in June and continuing until September. New plants should be destroyed to ensure seeds do not form. It is also important for landowners to be able to recognize puncturevine at an early stage of growth, as this is when it can most easily be controlled, as opposed to when it is large and seedpods have matured.