

# 19<sup>th</sup> PARTHENIUM AWARENESS WEEK

16-22 August, 2024

**Parthenium** (*Parthenium hysterophorus*) commonly known as *gajarghas*, congress grass, white cap or top, carrot weed, asadi, *safed topi*, *gajari*, *nakshatra gida*, *chatak chandani*, *phandriphuli* and *vayyari bhama* is an alien invasive weed of national importance. The weed was first reported in India during the 1950s. It has now been spread throughout the country affecting around more than 35 million hectares of crop and non-crop areas including railway tracks, roadsides, wastelands, gardens, etc.

It is an annual herbaceous plant reaching heights up to 1.5 to 2.0 meter. It mainly spreads



through seeds. *Parthenium* is a prolific seed producer (5,000 to 25,000 seeds/plant). The seeds may be easily transported by wind, water, and human activities due to their low weight.

It has been identified as one of the most hazardous weeds and causes health problems like dermatitis, asthma, and bronchitis in humans and livestock. On consumption, it can cause mouth ulcers with extreme salivation and diarrhoea in animals and reduces milk and meat quality. Being unpalatable, it can't be used as animal fodder. It is a serious invasive weed of pasture and other grazing lands reducing their productivity to a large extent.

## Control measures

- ❖ Since *Parthenium* is primarily a weed of no man's land, community initiatives by all sections of the society including colony members, farmers, municipalities, NGOs, school children etc. are required to keep their surroundings free from *Parthenium*.
- ❖ Organize meetings, trainings and demonstrations to make people aware about *Parthenium* menace and its management.
- ❖ Uproot the weed before flowering and make compost or vermicompost.
- ❖ Broadcast seeds of self-perpetuating competitive plant species like *Cassia tora*, *Tagetes erecta* to replace *Parthenium*.
- ❖ In non-cropped areas, spray herbicides like glyphosate (1.0-1.5%) for total vegetation control and metribuzin (0.3-0.5%) or 2,4-D (1.0-1.5%) if grasses are to be saved before flowering of *Parthenium*.
- ❖ In crops, broad-leaf weed killing herbicides should be used in consultation with weed scientists/experts.
- ❖ Release of bioagent *Zygogramma bicolorata* in *Parthenium* infested areas during July-August.



## APPEAL

*Parthenium* has become one of the rampant weeds throughout the globe causing enormous damage to agricultural productivity, human and animal health and biodiversity. In India, it has assumed serious proportions in cropped and non-cropped lands, city dwellings, rail and roadsides, and institutional campuses. Management of this weed requires specialists from multiple sectors to work together and tackle the problem as well as create awareness among the public regarding health hazards.

I am happy that the ICAR-Directorate of Weed Research (DWR), Jabalpur organizes '*Parthenium Awareness Week*' every year in the month of August to motivate the public for the management and eradication of this obnoxious weed. As you know the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment are interconnected, and "**One Health**" is an integrated approach that recognizes these fundamental relations. Therefore, *Parthenium* eradication is a step in this direction to maintain better ecological standards. The ICAR- Directorate of Weed Research (DWR), Jabalpur has developed very effective technologies for *Parthenium* management and its utilization in a sustainable manner. Moreover, it is becoming more important as a major activity of "**Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**" and therefore, all the institutes, universities and KVKs should ensure a "**Parthenium-free campus**" at the earliest.

This year **XIX Parthenium Awareness Week** is being organized by the Directorate from 16-22 August 2024 throughout the country. I appeal to all the staff of institutes, universities and KVKs to participate in this activity as a component of "**Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**" and to ensure a "**Parthenium-free campus**".



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**Join hands to eliminate Parthenium to save health, environment and biodiversity**

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