



Diagnostic Facts



Diagnostic Services
Michigan State University

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www.cips.msu.edu/diagnostics

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Screening for Herbicide-Resistant Marestalk in Soybean Production Systems

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Marestalk (*Conyza canadensis*), also known as horseweed, has become a troublesome weed in many parts of the Eastern U.S. in recent years for many reasons. Marestalk prefers reduced tillage situations. The adoption of no-till soybeans has provided a window of emergence that was otherwise not there. Marestalk has a very long emergence period - much longer than some weeds. Marestalk can emerge in the fall and overwinter as a small rosette or

emerge in the spring with other summer annual weeds. If allowed to mature, a single marestalk plant is capable of producing thousands of wind-disseminated seed. Burndown applications of glyphosate and/or 2,4-D in no-till soybeans can be quite variable depending upon the height of marestalk and environmental conditions. Moreover, control of marestalk has

become more problematic due to the development of herbicide-resistant populations. Currently, glyphosate-resistant marestalk has been confirmed in at least ten states. ALS-resistant marestalk has been confirmed in OH, Indiana, and in 11 locations spanning seven counties in Michigan.

Marestalk Identification

Marestalk is a winter or summer annual plant that first forms a small, basal rosette and then an erect, 1 to 5 foot tall stem. Young rosette leaves have toothed to lobed leaf margins, prominent petioles, and are covered with short, stiff hairs (Photo 1). Leaves produced on the main stem are alternate in arrangement, numerous, often crowded on the

stem, and covered with coarse, stiff hairs (Photo 2). Stem leaves are long and narrow, sessile to short-petioled, with toothed but usually entire leaf margins (Photo 2). Mature plants produce an erect stem that is unbranched at the base but often branched at the seedhead and covered with short, bristly hairs. Branches from the main stem produce many slender flower stalks with



Photo 1. Small basal rosette of marestalk.

numerous, small, white flowers (Photos 3 and 4). Being an annual member of the aster family, a mature marestalk plant is capable of producing thousands of wind-disseminated seed. This seed, much smaller and lighter than dandelion seed, is able to blow considerable distances by wind.

Herbicide Resistance Screen

We are asking for your assistance in scouting and sampling for herbicide-resistant marestail. Glyphosate and ALS inhibitors are very important to Michigan soybean producers. Identifying herbicide resistant marestail populations in Michigan will allow growers and Ag professionals to recognize the problem and implement appropriate management strategies, with the goal of preventing or limiting its spread. *To address this problem, marestail will be screened for glyphosate, ALS, and triazine resistance in Diagnostic Services at Michigan State University.* **This service is FREE to Michigan soybean producers. All sample costs are covered by checkoff dollars through the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee.**

If you have fields where marestail has been a problem and resistance is suspected, collect seedheads from mature plants in late summer to early fall. Consult the marestail submittal form for detailed sampling instructions on field criteria and seedhead collection.



Photo 2. Long and narrow leaves found crowded on erect, central stem of marestail.



Photo 3. Closeup of small, numerous, white flowers of marestail.

Marestail submittal forms will be available at various locations, including county MSU Extension offices, grain elevators, and chemical retail businesses. Marestail seedheads and the submittal form should be dropped off at your local county MSU Extension office or sent directly to:

MSU Diagnostic Services
101 Center for Integrated
Plant Systems
East Lansing, MI 48824
Attn: Steven Gower

If you have any questions, please call Steven Gower at 517-432-9693 or send an email to sgower@msu.edu.



Photo 4. Mature marestail seedhead.



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