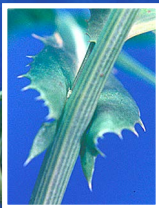


Annual and spiny sowthistle



Annual
sowthistle



Spiny
sowthistle

Annual and spiny sowthistle

[*Sonchus oleraceus* L. and *S. asper* (L.) Hill]

Annual and spiny sowthistle are annuals and differ primarily in leaf form. Spiny sowthistle, as the name implies, has sharp stiff prickles along the stem and leaves. Leaves clasp the stem with rounded basal lobes (auricles) that resemble a ram's horn. Annual sowthistle leaves are deeply toothed lower on the plant but progressively less so on the upper stem. Both species have yellow flowers borne on a long, vase-like stalk, with several in a cluster. Annual and spiny sowthistle contain a milky latex and grow from a small taproot. Spiny sowthistle has slightly larger flower heads (0.5 to 1 inch across), compared with annual sowthistle (0.25 to 0.75 inch). The seeds for both are flattened with three to five ribs. Both species grow 2 to 4 feet tall.

These annual sowthistle species can become competitive in cropland but otherwise are a nuisance species rather than invasive. Only annual sowthistle is county-listed.

