

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,
but may have limited distribution in some counties

Mediterranean sage
Salvia aethiopsis

Other common names: Ethiopian sage, African sage

USDA symbol: SAAE
ODA rating: B



Introduction: Mediterranean sage is native to the Mediterranean region and North Africa. Its introduction was the result of importing contaminated alfalfa seed. It is primarily a rangeland invader. Plants are very identifiable having a pungent mint-like odor and very fuzzy leaves

Distribution in Oregon: The first record of this plant in Oregon is 1921 in Wheeler County. It grows densely in many locations especially in Lake and Klamath Counties. Many other counties are host to expanding populations.

Description: Mediterranean sage is a biennial growing generally two feet tall. First year growth consists of a large grayish rosette supported by a stout taproot. The leaves are very pungent when crushed. Flowers are mint-like, ½ to 1 inch long, yellowish-white, forming woolly clusters in a profusely branched arrangement, resembling a candelabra. Bloom time ranges from June to July. It is a prolific seed producer dispersing them similar to a tumbleweed across rangeland in late summer and fall.

Impacts: Though not as impacting as many other weed species, Mediterranean sage is still a troublesome pest in pastures and rangelands throughout eastern Oregon. It reduces grassland quality and yields, is unpalatable to most grazing animals and often forms dense monocultures. This weed can be found in rangeland, alfalfa, and wheat, particularly on dry, south-facing slopes.

Biological controls: Biocontrol has aided in limiting the rapid spread of the plant. One biological control agent, a root weevil, has successfully established in Oregon now for many decades.

