

WATER FOR THE FUTURE

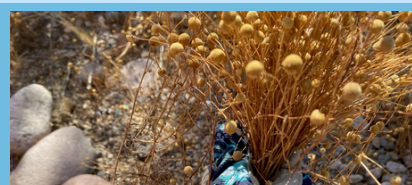
Your source for water conservation tips and updates

WATER Conservation

AND HOW YOU CAN MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT...

HIDDEN WATER USE

How much water is
really needed for
these common items?



STINKNET INVASION?

Find out what you
can do to stop it...

INSIDE, WE ALSO TALK ABOUT:

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Hidden Water Use

Help conserve water by knowing the facts...



**Do you know the water footprint
of these everyday products?**



**~2800
gallons**
for a pair of jeans

It takes an estimated 2,800 gallons of water to produce one single pair of denim jeans.¹

Thinking about buying a brand-new pair of jeans? Try thrifting a pair instead! The best news? They are already nicely worn in!



**~650
gallons**
for a cotton tee

It takes an estimated 650 gallons of water to produce a single cotton t-shirt.¹

From start to finish, cotton takes up a lot of water to come together for a fresh T-Shirt. Before you toss that T-shirt, try donating it first. Someone will certainly love your 'vintage' Tee!



**~1.5
gallons**
for a 16 oz bottle

It takes twice as much water to produce a single plastic water bottle as the amount of water actually stored inside the bottle.²

Sometimes in Arizona, you need to drink water from whatever means necessary, and that's ok. If you can, try carrying a reusable water bottle.



Evaporation is costing you

Let's fix that...

As the Summer heat drags on, many of us Arizona folks are left with a landscape that is drained of life. It's not your fault. Evaporation of water from our plants occurs at a very high rate in Arizona, especially during the summer. Allow mulch to help you.

Mulch is the magic. Mulch can be placed around the base of your plants to keep the cool party going for the microorganisms and roots found beneath your plant. Mulch provides shade for the soil, making sure things stay a nice temperature for our plants root systems.

Next time you're at a convenience store on a Saturday, try picking up a bag of organic mulch to sprinkle around your plants. **It will limit the amount of water that is evaporated from our soil**, keeping our plants- from the roots to the tip top stem- happy and thriving.³

“Mulch is the Magic”



Stinknet Invasion?

We need a conservation invasion!

By Lily G. Surmay

I'm willing to bet that

you've probably seen it: round, bright yellow flower blooms sprouting up all across Arizona, in the most unlikely locations. But don't let this pretty little flower fool you; this plant is one bad seed. Known as the Stinknet, or more formally as *Oncosiphon pilulifer* (and previously called globe chamomile), this invasive weed species originally from South Africa has been quietly taking over Arizona (and the Southwest) since the late 1990's.⁴

Although Stinknet may look harmless, its characteristics include being a massive wildfire hazard, respiratory distress causing, and is downright an ecological bully! Brace yourself for four reasons why we should all be in the know about Stinknet... and don't say I didn't warn you!



A Perfect Storm...

First, Stinknet is perfect fuel for wildfires.

Once Stinknet reaches full maturity and dies, it dries out completely, remaining in closely knit tan-colored bundles blanketing the ground, creating acre after acre of flammable brush. You see, dry Stinknet is the perfect tinder for fire. It's been a major contributor to wildfires all across Arizona, destroying everything in its path once it ignites...and releasing toxic chemicals into the air as it does so.

Oh, goodie!

Second, Stinknet literally stinks. The name says it all. This invasive weed emits a strong and unpleasant odor that reportedly causes nausea to folks in close proximity to the plant.⁴ Unfortunately, Stinknet also poses a significant health risk, as it can cause serious respiratory distress or irritation in some individuals.⁴

Fun Fact: Stinknet has stuck to its “rebranded” name. That’s right, although previously referred to as globe chamomile, the name was causing public confusion ever since people started harvesting bundles and selling them as drinkable herbal tea.⁴ Please don’t get it twisted: this type of chamomile is not the tea you think it might be.

“It does not have any known positive medicinal or nutritional value.”

-Jerome Pinacate, Park Ranger, City of PHX

Third, Stinknet is useless to Arizona wildlife.

What...who said that? I did, because it is completely unpalatable; animals and insects alike avoid it, and have never reportedly been seen snacking on it.⁴ Stinknet offers no nutritional substance, no shelter, and no ecological value to its surrounding environment. Instead, it crowds out native vegetation. This means, our state’s very own vegetation is struggling to compete, with the notorious Stinknet encroaching and stealing precious resources right out from the soil beneath them. This causes a domino effect, with wildlife having one less tree to seek shelter and retreat to.

Fourth, Stinknet is a relentless spreader. This flower seems to be the cockroach of invasive species. One single flower head can and will release around 100 seeds with a single shake of the branch. Dried seedlings are fragile, spread and crumble apart effortlessly. They spread through static-charge on countless objects (think shoes, camping tents, and even dogs)! These seeds thrive by staying dormant every year in the soil and germinate after just one rainy season. These seedlings can also live out the harshest of conditions.⁷ Even after Stinknet burned down acres of land, those very seeds remain dormant under a blanket of ash, waiting for the next stormy season and rain to come so they too can cause their own perfect storm.



Volunteers seen wearing gloves to hand-pull Stinknet, throwing it away into double-lined trash bags.



Thick bundles of dead Stinknet shown blanketing the ground at the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

What can be done?

So, what can we do? Look, Stinknet may be pretty. But its beauty tends to fade when it carelessly burns down landscapes leaving devastating scenes behind, choking out native life, and filling the air with its toxic smell. It's not its fault; it just doesn't belong here. But since you and I do belong here, let's cover a couple of basic mitigation practices so we can work together to have a conservation invasion, not a Stinknet invasion. *Oh brother.*

See it? Pull it. Hand-pulling is the most effective way to fight back. I promise. Now you may be thinking, "Lily, you just told me this plant is toxic and makes some people have respiratory distress." I know. But there are measures you can take to protect yourself first, and our environment next!

How? Wear gloves and a mask (the plant can irritate skin and lungs), then pull the plant out from the root and immediately throw away into (optimally) double-bagged trash bags.⁶

It is best to pull these weeds when they are young sprouts (before they flower and seed) so that the seeds are least susceptible to crumbling apart and spreading out.⁴

"It's the sad reality that comes with invasive species"

-Lily G. Surmay, Water Conservation Specialist, GWR

If you're thinking trash bags are a uncommon denominator here, it's because they are. Obviously, filling up landfills with trash bags full of Stinknet may seem counteractive when it comes to conservation and saving the earth. However, this is the sad reality that comes with invasive species, and is a part of the havoc they wreak in our everyday lives, environment, and habitat.

Why not spray, burn, or even vacuum? Many herbicides are not species-specific, with potential to affect native plants.⁴ Burning this plant, even in a controlled-fire environment, releases toxins into our atmosphere.⁵ As far as vacuuming goes, well this is just not a practical option for mitigation unless you want to spend a pretty penny on a special seed-filtering vacuum.

As you hopefully now know, Stinknet comes with some serious environmental and health repercussions. It is up to us to see it, pull it, report it. If you see Stinknet in your area, you can contact the Environmental Services department for your county. There are also volunteer groups that meet up to pull Stinknet every year in the Fall. One of my favorites to volunteer at is the Arizona Sustainability Alliance, where their Adopt-A-Park program gets together to clear out this noxious weed around the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center in Phoenix.

Let's help Arizona together and do our part to spread awareness about Stinknet.

We are in this for Arizona, together... right?!

See Stinknet in your community?

Report it! Go to www.stinknet.org/ to report where you see it!

Want to Volunteer? Go to <https://azsustain.org/volunteer/> to sign up to help remove Stinknet!

Want to read more? Check out: [*Stinknet: A Weed Advancing in Southern Arizona*](#) by Michael Chamberland



No Need to **Overseed**

How a lush
winter lawn



demands
your water,
time and
money.

Did You Know...

that germinating
ryegrass in the winter
demands 90 times more
water than your dormant
Bermuda grass?⁸

Save your time, water,
and money this season
by saying bye to rye! If
you have turf, allow your
water usage to stay low
by embracing your
Bermudas natural fall
color.

By not overseeding, over
8,000 gallons of water
can be saved for every
1,000 square feet of
grass each season.⁸ To
put into perspective,
that is equivalent to

51,200

20oz water bottles!



Be the change in your community, protect AZ's
water supply by not overseeding!

Kids can save water too!

Water conservation education is for everyone! Check out these fun activities for children that help teach the importance of water conservation.

Click on the links found at the bottom of the newsletter!

Recommended Age 7+

1

What's Your Water Super-Hero Name?

2

Crossword Puzzle Time!

3

Make this landscape colorful!

4

What happens if you shower for just 60 seconds less?



Water Saving Tip: #55

Be a leak detective! Check all hoses, connectors, and faucets regularly for leaks.



WATER
USE IT
WISELY



Sources

¹ <https://watercalculator.org/footprint/the-hidden-water-in-everyday-products/#:~:text=Hidden%20water%20is%20water%20that,step%20of%20the%20production%20process>

² <https://watercalculator.org/posts/recycle-plastic/>

³ <https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/attachment/Mulches.pdf>

⁴ <https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-08/az1827-2023.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.stinknet.org/>

⁶ https://tucson.com/life-entertainment/local/home-gardening/article_c6c8b8d4-f601-11ee-add4-77d79bff81c2.html

⁷ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/rec.13922>

⁸ <https://wateruseitwisely.com/blog/plant-of-the-month-to-not-plant-ryegrass-or-winter-grass/>