

Wood Avens (*Geum canadense*)

DESCRIPTION:

Wood avens is an adaptable, short-lived, weedy native perennial that can be found in any kind of shaded habitat in our region. It is found in small numbers even in healthy woods, but becomes very abundant in disturbed woodlands and groves of weedy trees and brush such as overgrown abandoned fields and pastures. This plant is tolerant to phytotoxic chemical Juglone released by leaves and roots of the walnut tree. Seeds cling to, and are efficiently distributed by, mammal fur, bird feathers, and clothing of humans. This attribute can make wood avens a bit of a nuisance where it has become over-abundant. Nectar and pollen from the small white flowers attract numerous species of bees, wasps, flies and beetles.

**-1
Minor
Pest**

IDENTIFICATION:

Leaves of first-year plants are low to the ground and spread from a central point. These leaves are, linear, compound with many lobes and leaflets, and almost fern-like, often appear pale or frosted towards the center of the leaf and stem. On second year plants leaves on the lower stem are usually broad three-lobed, while upper leaves are typically lobeless all with irregularly-toothed margins. Leaf surfaces are often covered with short, bristly hairs, especially along major veins. Small, white five-petaled flowers bloom in clusters of 1-3 on top of each stem in mid-summer. Flowers are replaced by spheroid bundles of seeds with hooked tips.



CONTROL METHODS:

Organic: Generally control of this species is not needed, except in extreme cases. This plant can be dug or pulled out in loose soil if the population is small enough. Make sure that all of the root fragments are removed. You can weed-whip or cut down second year plants during the flowering stage to prevent seed development, though multiple mowings may be necessary to prevent reproduction entirely.

Chemical: Careful spot-applications of glyphosate (Roundup®, etc.) or triclopyr (Garlon®, etc.) are the easiest and most effective means of control. Triclopyr is a broadleaf-specific herbicide and won't harm grasses or sedges. Be carefully not to 'overspray' and harm neighboring, desirable plants. It is best to apply herbicide to the smaller first-year plants before they have a chance to bolt.

Always read herbicide labels carefully before use and always apply according to the instruction on the product label.

NOTE: Stay on, and keep pets on, established roads and trails to prevent weed seed dispersal. Clean off shoes and clothes of any seeds before traveling to other locations and dispose of the seeds in the trash.



NATIVE ALTERNATIVES:

A diverse selection of woodland species will compete with weedier plants and provide for a more resilient and productive plant community. For flowering plants in part shade or the woodland edge, consider wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*), solomon's seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*) and Zig-Zag goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*).

