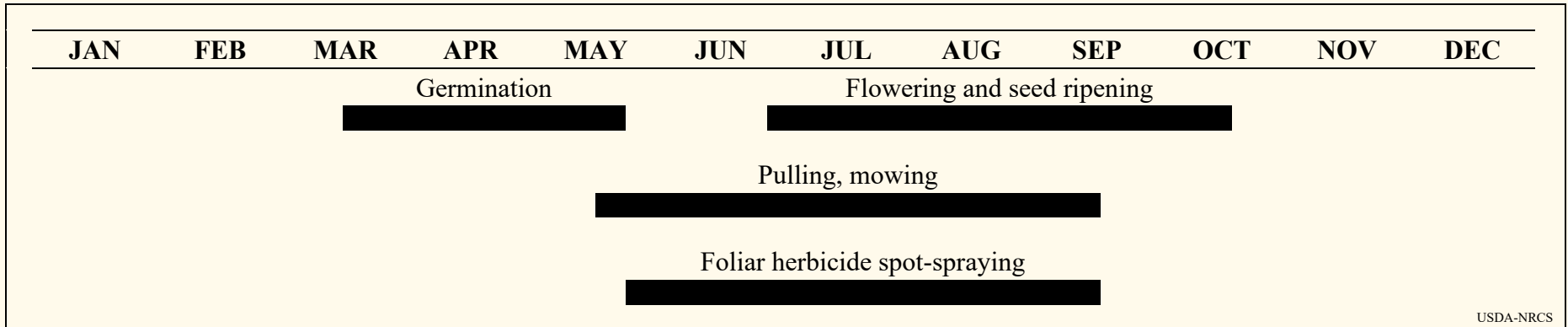


## Controlling Naturalized and Volunteer *Cannabis sativa* L.



Naturalized cannabis (often referred to as feral hemp or ditch weed) is a summer annual native to Asia. Cannabis was introduced to Kansas as a crop in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It was grown as hemp to produce fiber for rope production, especially during the world wars. After the war effort diminished, its production halted but the plant had already escaped into the ditches (hence the name ditch weed) and other unmanaged areas. Since 2019, Kansans began legally producing industrial hemp ( $\leq 0.3\%$  THC), which, like the original crop, may be used to produce grain, seed, fiber, and other products. Also, like naturalized cannabis, industrial hemp may have invasive tendencies.

Naturalized and volunteer cannabis may have little impact on Kansas agriculture as it will likely be present in low numbers. Therefore, control is feasible and can be limited to post-emergence practices. If left unmanaged, control measures may become less feasible and more cumbersome. The simplest method of control is to pull the plants or mow them to the ground. Because the plant is an annual, it will not have a deep or extensive root system and destroying the seed or preventing seed production will suffice. You can treat cannabis with foliar herbicides such as glyphosate or 2,4-D. Generally, cannabis will not be that difficult to control, but large plants will probably take a considerable dosage to effectively control compared to seedlings or small plants.

If the population has been in place for a while, a seedbank will probably have developed. This development means that control efforts will have to continue for a few years until the seedbank has been depleted.

**If you believe the plants have been planted for drug use, notify law enforcement officials to have them destroyed.**  
**If you believe the plants originated from an industrial hemp planting, notify the Kansas Department of Agriculture before pulling or spraying them:**  
**(785) 564-6700.**

Treatment	Details
Pulling, mowing	You can pull plants as soon as you can recognize them. Remove the roots to prevent regrowth. If ripe seeds shatter to the ground, multiple years of pulling and mowing may be necessary for control.
Foliar herbicide spot-treatment	If you find cannabis easier to treat than to pull, post-emergent spot treatment with a glyphosate or a 2,4-D-containing product should be effective and inexpensive. Product labels will provide directions for small-batch spot treatment mixtures to be applied on a “spray to wet” basis. Large cannabis plants can be 10 ft. tall and will require a significant volume of spray solution. It may be easier to pull these plants or cut them at ground level.