

# Emex spinosa

## Spiny emex

*Emex spinosa* (L.) Campd

Family: Polygonaceae

**Description:** Annual herb, 1–2 ft tall, decumbent or ascending. Leaves smooth, ovate to nearly triangular, 4 inches long, 2.5 inches wide, margins entire. Petioles to 1.5 inches long. Male flowers in clusters at the axils and terminals, female in axils. Mature fruit 0.5 inches long, woody, dry, tipped with 3 sharp, hard spines<sup>(20, 70)</sup>. Generic name coined from ex, out of, and *Rumex*, the original genus in which this plant was placed; *spinosa*, with spines<sup>(70, 19)</sup>.

**Distribution:** Origin the Mediterranean area. Occurs in dry to mesic areas, 500–6000 ft elevation on Hawai‘i, Maui, Moloka‘i, and O‘ahu. First collected in 1928 on Moloka‘i<sup>(70)</sup>.

**Environmental impact:** Spiny fruits can cause painful injuries so are a nuisance in pastures, roadsides, and natural areas.



**Management:** Sanitation is important in preventing the spread of spiny emex. The spiny fruits stick to soles of shoes and to vehicle tires. Very sensitive to dicamba; 0.25 lb/acre sufficient to kill all treated plants.