

BINDII

Soliva sessilis



Photographs are courtesy of Dr Sheldon Navie

Description & life cycle

Bindii (*Soliva sessilis*) is primarily a winter-growing weed of south-eastern QLD and eastern NSW. It is relatively short-lived, usually appearing in June and dying in November, when the weather becomes warmer. It is primarily a weed of lawns, playing fields and parks, and its spiny seeds are a familiar menace to bare-footed children.

Bindii germinates each year from long-lived seeds that accumulate in the soil. Young plants form a rosette of small carrot-like leaves at first, but they produce short spreading stems as the plants mature. Growth continues through late winter and into early spring, when the competition from turf grasses is lowest. The seeds are usually produced in clusters in the forks of the stems in August and September. They are soft and green at first, but as the temperatures begin to rise during spring they turn into hard brown prickles. The Bindii plants usually die off in late spring or early summer, once the seeds fully mature.

In nature, the spiny burr-like seeds are designed to attach to the fur or hides of animals, thereby aiding their dispersal. However, they are also well-adapted to suburban habitats, and are easily spread from place to place after becoming embedded in shoes, clothing and tyres. Additional spread can also occur when the seeds are transported in lawn clippings by mowers or slashers.

Key features

- > Bindii grows very low to the ground, making it impossible to be mown out.
- > It is particularly common in worn areas around playgrounds, in picnic spots, under trees and in other shady areas.
- > It also likes compacted ground and low nitrogen soil conditions.
- > It is too late to spray when the burrs turn into hard brown prickles.

Control

1. If only a few Bindii plants are present they can be easily lifted with a fork or removed with a stiff rake.
2. If Bindii is identified early in the season and control occurs before the formation of burrs, treatment with a registered selective turf herbicide product is the most effective method of control. Most products have the added benefit of also controlling Clover and a number of other problem broadleaf weeds which often emerge in autumn and winter.
3. Depending upon the level of infestation, as well as seasonal factors such rainfall and soil temperature, Bindii germination may continue into late winter. Therefore appropriate timing is critical for effective, seasonal control.
4. Experience tells us that asset managers who program the treatment of Bindii at the right time of the year have fewer complaints and significantly reduced infestations in the following season. For further assistance and programming of your Bindii treatment, please talk to a Technigro turf specialist.