**Common Name:** Mulberry Weed, Crabweed & Hairy Crabweed  
**Scientific Name:** *Fatoua villosa*

Mulberry Weed (*Fatoua villosa*) is a new and increasingly important weed in Southeastern nurseries and landscapes. Plants purchased from nurseries often contain Mulberry Weed and/or its seeds. It is rapidly spreading in container nurseries and landscapes in the southeastern United States.

As already noted, Mulberry Weed is a new weed problem and is native to Asia. Mulberry Weed was first identified in the United States in 1962 in Louisiana, but little was heard of it for the next 30 years. Then, sometime in the mid 1990s, it's suspected to have hitchhiked a ride on nursery stock to gardens all across the southern states.

According to a report by North Carolina State University, Mulberry Weed is spreading at a rapid rate. The report noted more than 50% of nurseries scouted in a scouted area had Mulberry Weed. In 1998 this percentage had risen to 75%.

Mulberry Weed is an upright, summer annual weed in its northern range. However, it can grow as a perennial in our growing region. Mulberry Weed has roughly triangular leaves with toothed margins and a somewhat woody stem. It resembles a mulberry seedling but Mulberry Weed has hairy leaves and stems.

Flowers appear as tannish, pea-sized, feathery clusters at each node. It is a prolific seed producer and can expel seed up to 4 feet. The weed develops quickly, going from seed to flower in less than two weeks and can produce several generations in one growing season.

Mulberry Weed is very adaptable—it can grow to a height of 3-to-4 feet and it can survive and produce seed even under closely mowed conditions! Mulberry Weed is typically found in moist, shady areas. It can germinate in any temperature between 60 to 90 degrees.

The first line of defense is to learn to identify it. Be sure to pull it before the seeds mature. Dispose of it in the trash, do not compost. The compost pile may not get hot enough to kill the seeds. Light is needed for germination, so a 2-inch layer of mulch will give some, but not complete, control.

The homeowners have few options for control by pre-emergence herbicides in landscape beds. Even Preen herbicide is reported to provide poor pre-emergence control. Broad spectrum non-selective herbicides can be used to control Mulberry Weed. Products containing glyphosate (ex., Roundup) or glufosinate (ex., Finale) provide good control but care must be exercised as they will also kill desirable plants.

Moral of this story: Be on the alert! When using any chemical spray, observe all directions, restrictions, and precautions.

While Mulberry Weed is not yet widespread in Galveston County, it's gaining a foothold and homeowners should be alert to identifying this weed and preventing its entry to the home landscape. This weed is being rapidly spread by nurseries through container-grown plants. Before purchasing, check new plants for weed infestations.