

# India's **11** Most Dangerous Invasive Plants

Foreign Plants That Are Reshaping  
India's Forests & Farmlands



[Source: Nature Sustainability Socioecological risks amplified by rising plant invasions in India" \(Mungi et al.\)](#)

# Crofton Weed



## *Ageratina adenophora*

**Type:** Shrubby Herb / Perennial

**Native to:** Mexico & Central America

### **Presence in India:**

- Widespread across Himalayas, Northeast, Western Ghats, Central India
- Thrives along roadsides, forest edges, plantations, and disturbed land

### **Why is it harmful:**

- Replaces native plants
- **Toxic to livestock (horse, cattle)**
- Reduces fodder availability for wildlife
- Spreads aggressively after disturbances like road construction or fires

### **How it spreads:**

- Wind dispersed seeds

**Severity Level:** ● High

### **Management Difficulty:**

● Hard to control

- Regrows after cutting
- Seedbank persists for years



# Billygoat Weed

## *Ageratina conyzoides*



**Type:** Herb / Annual

**Native to:** Central America

### **Presence in India:**

- Widespread across Himalayas, Northeast, Central, Southern India

### **Why is it harmful:**

- Replaces native plants
- Competes with crops, reducing yield
- **Hosts crop pests and pathogens**

### **How it spreads:**

- Wind dispersed seeds

### **Severity Level:**

● Moderate–High

### **Management Difficulty:**

● Moderate



# Siam Weed

## Chromolaena odorata



**Type:** Shrub

**Native to:** Central & South America

**Presence in India:**

- Widespread across Northeast, Eastern Ghats, Andaman & Nicobar, and parts of Central India

**Why is it harmful:**

- Forms dense, impenetrable thickets
- **Increases forest fire risk**
- Toxic to livestock
- Prevents regeneration of native trees

**How it spreads:**

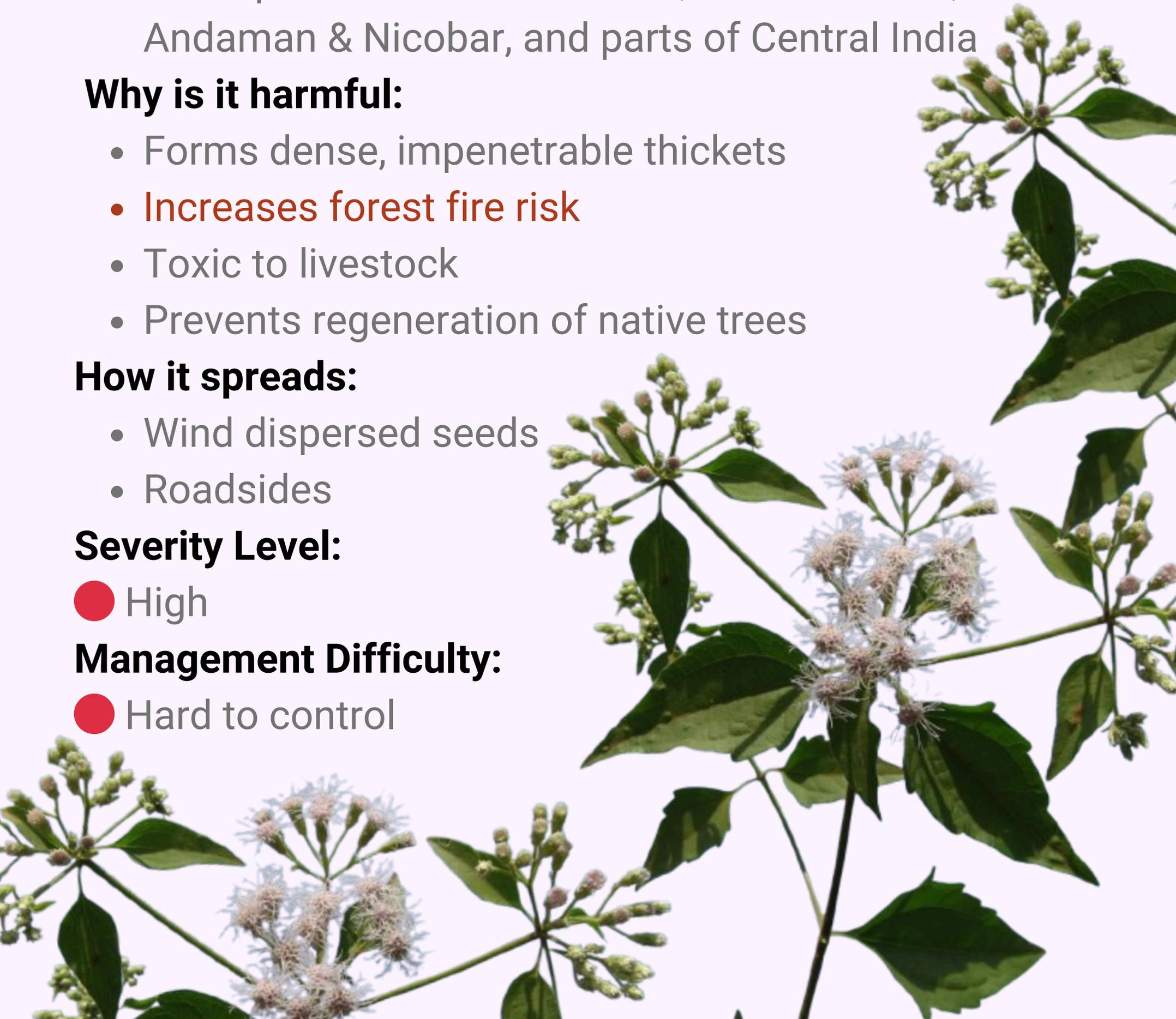
- Wind dispersed seeds
- Roadsides

**Severity Level:**

● High

**Management Difficulty:**

● Hard to control



# Lantana



## Lantana camara

**Type:** Woody Shrub

**Native to:** Central & South America

### Presence in India:

- Across most states — Western Ghats, Aravalis, Central India, Himalayan foothills

### Why is it harmful:

- Aggressive thickets choke native undergrowth
- Alters fire frequency and soil composition
- Reduces space for grazing wildlife and livestock
- **Difficult to eradicate; re-sprouts vigorously**

### How it spreads:

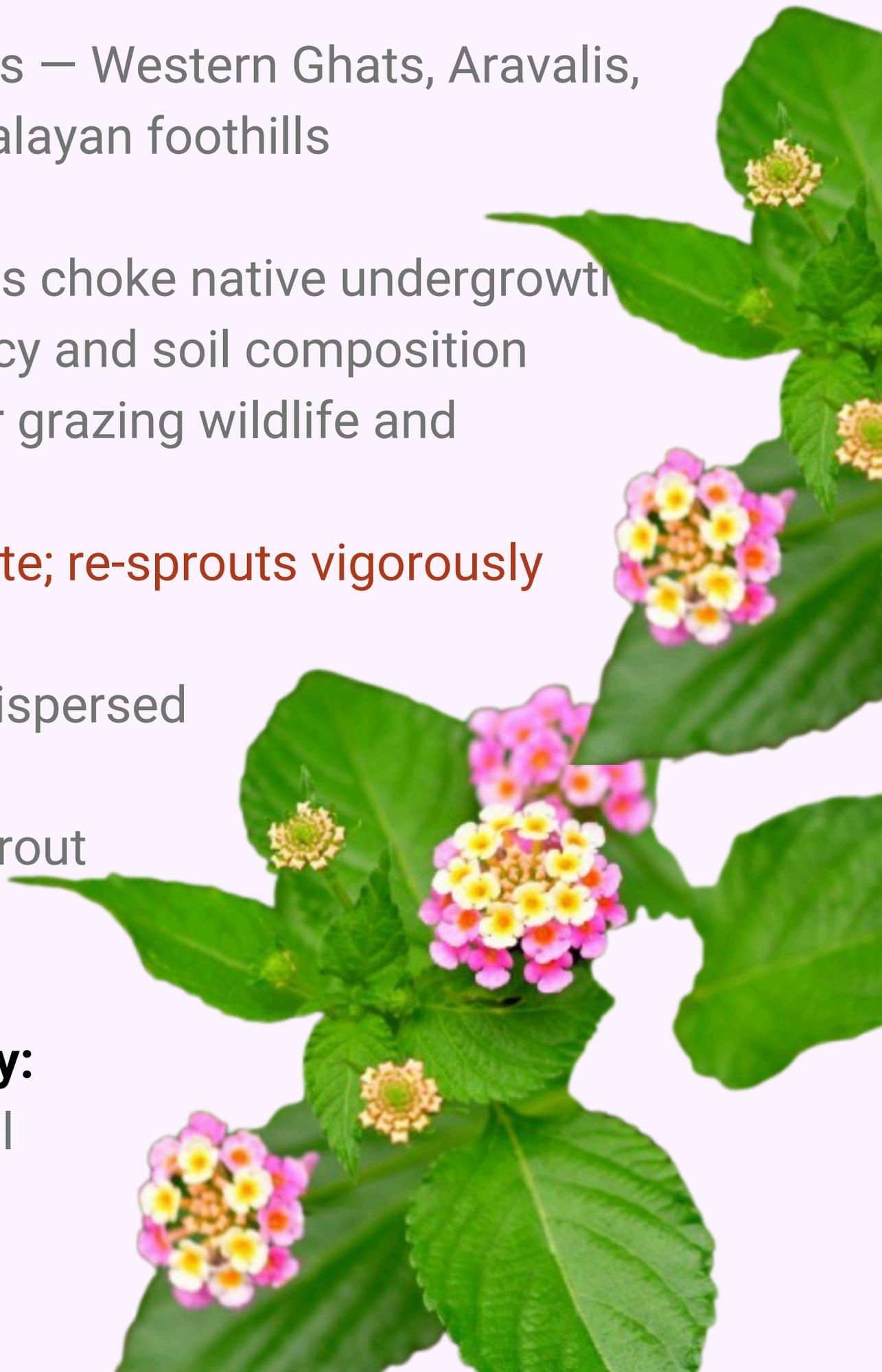
- Bird- and animal-dispersed berries
- Cut branches resprout

### Severity Level:

● Extremely High

### Management Difficulty:

● Very Hard to control



# Wild Hyptis

## Mesosphaerum suaveolens



**Type:** Herbaceous Shrub

**Native to:** Tropical America

**Presence in India:**

- Northeast, Eastern Ghats, Central India, Andaman & Nicobar islands

**Why is it harmful:**

- **Outcompetes native understorey plants**
- Reduces soil moisture
- Allelopathic (suppresses nearby plant growth)

**How it spreads:**

- Wind-borne seeds
- Road construction
- Soil transport

**Severity Level:**

● Moderate

**Management Difficulty:**

● Moderate



# Mile-a-minute Weed



## Mikania micrantha

**Type:** Fast-growing Vine

**Native to:** Central & South America

### **Presence in India:**

- Northeast, West Bengal, Kerala, Andaman & Nicobar islands

### **Why is it harmful:**

- Smothers trees, shrubs, and crops
- Reduces light, leading to plant death
- **Rapid growth – up to 20 cm/day**

### **How it spreads:**

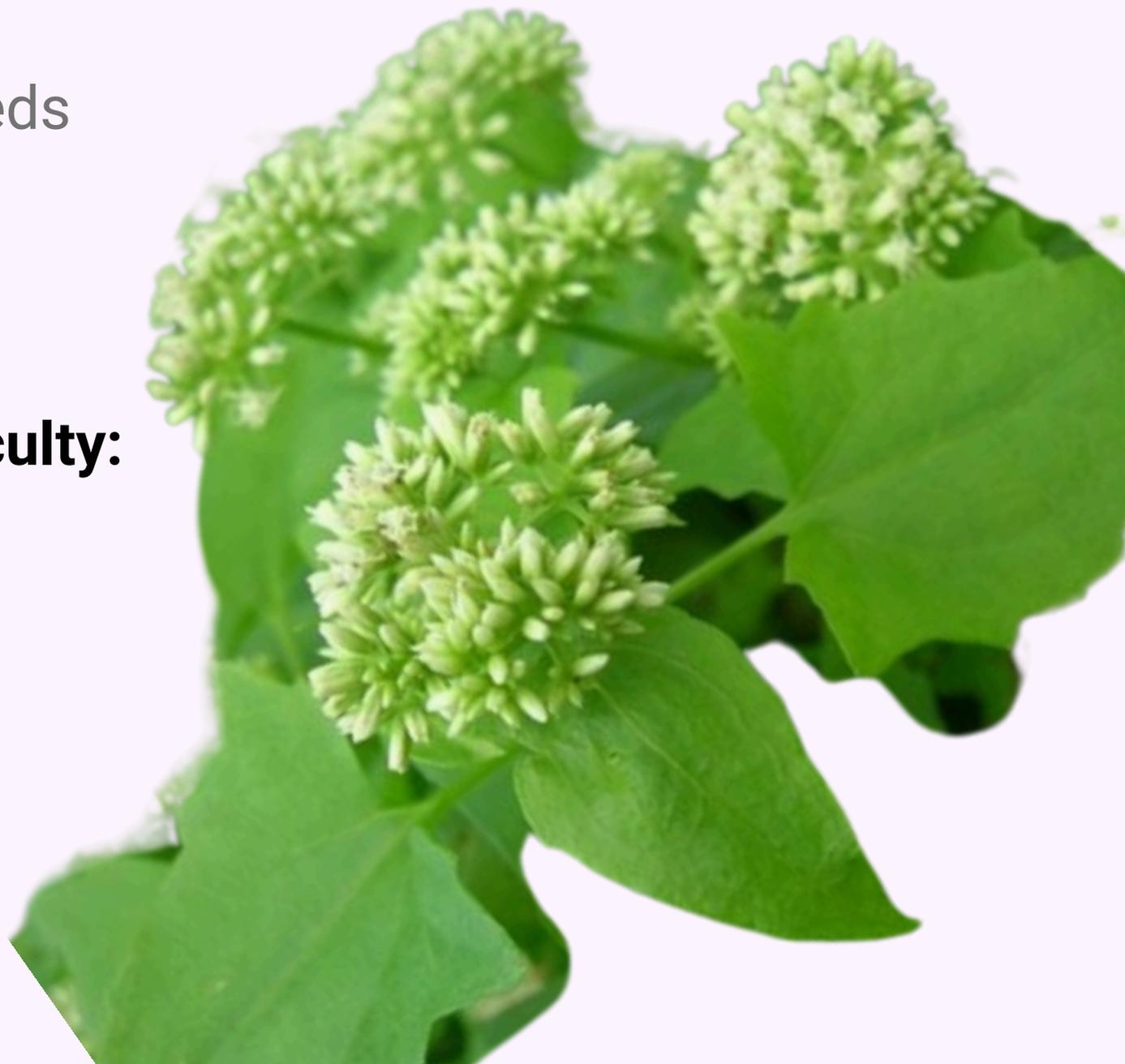
- Wind-borne seeds
- Flood waters

### **Severity Level:**

● Extremely High

### **Management Difficulty:**

● Difficult



# Giant Touch-me-not



## Mimosa diplotricha

**Type:** Thorny Climbing Shrub

**Native to:** South America

**Presence in India:**

- Widespread across India

**Why is it harmful:**

- **Dense, thorny thickets hinder movement of animals & people**
- Reduces grazing land
- Closes off forest paths
- Spreads rapidly in humid zones

**How it spreads:**

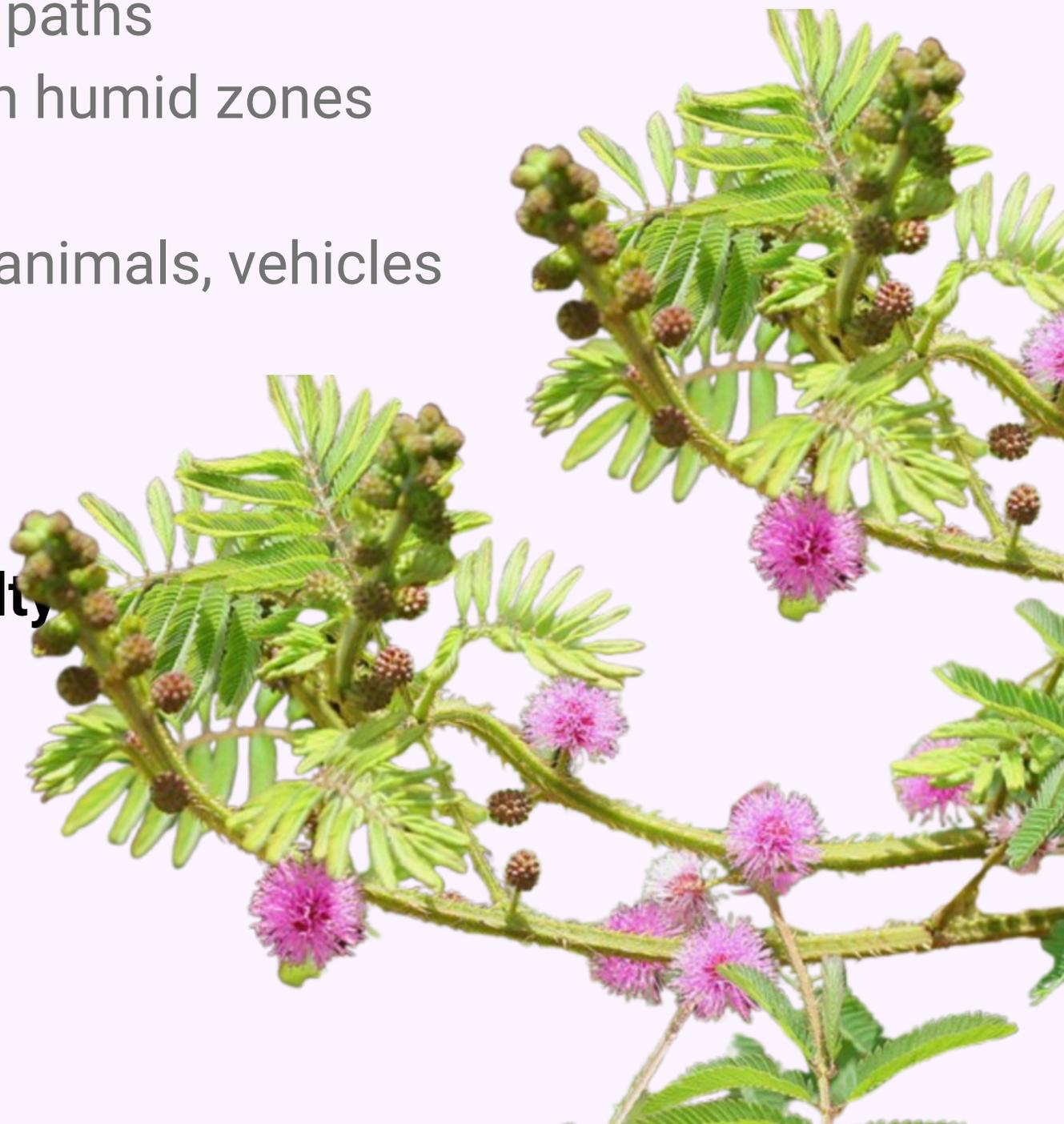
- Seeds via water, animals, vehicles
- Disturbed soil

**Severity Level:**

● High

**Management Difficulty**

● Moderate



# Congress Grass

## Parthenium hysterophorus



**Type:** Herb

**Native to:** Central America

**Presence in India:**

- Widespread across the plains – one of India's worst agricultural weeds

**Why is it harmful:**

- Causes allergies, dermatitis, asthma
- Reduces crop yields
- Toxic to livestock
- Suppresses native vegetation through allelopathy

**How it spreads:**

- Wind-dispersed seeds
- Farm machinery
- Contaminated fodder
- Disturbed soil

**Severity Level:**

● High

**Management Difficulty:**

● Moderate-Difficult



# Vilayati Babool



## Prosopis juliflora

**Type:** Invasive Tree

**Native to:** Central & South America

**Presence in India:**

- Arid & semi-arid regions — Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi

**Why is it harmful:**

- Displaces native grasses and trees
- **Alters groundwater levels**
- Thorny thickets impede movement
- Lowers biodiversity in grasslands

**How it spreads:**

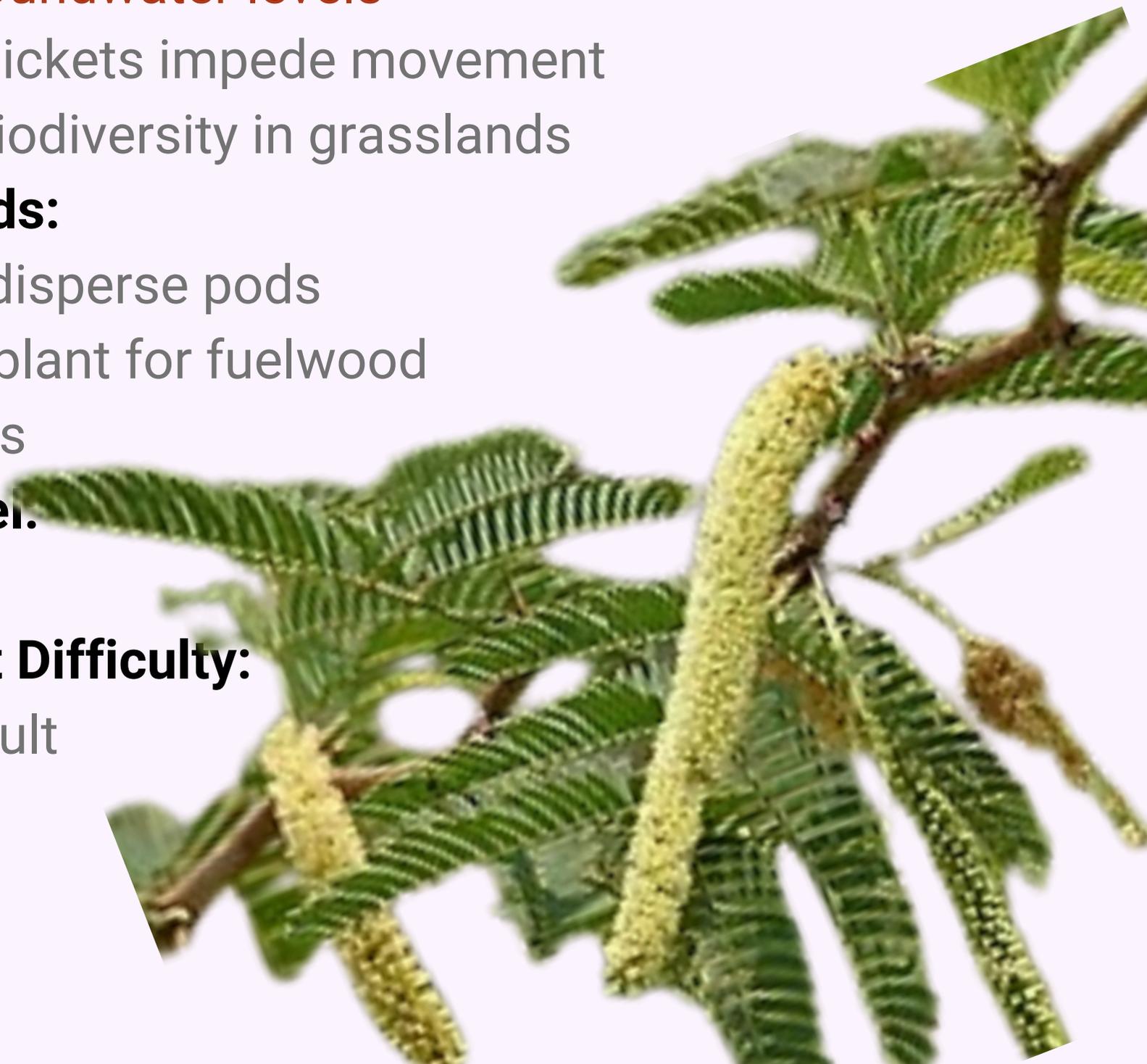
- Animals disperse pods
- Humans plant for fuelwood
- Roadsides

**Severity Level.**

● High

**Management Difficulty:**

● Very Difficult



# Sickle Senna / Chakunda

**Senna tora**

**Type:** Annual Shrub / Herb

**Native to:** Tropical America

**Presence in India:**

- Common in central & southern states, spreading in open lands

**Why is it harmful:**

- Invades fallow farmlands and open forests
- **Outcompetes grass species used for grazing**
- Rapid seed production increases spread

**How it spreads:**

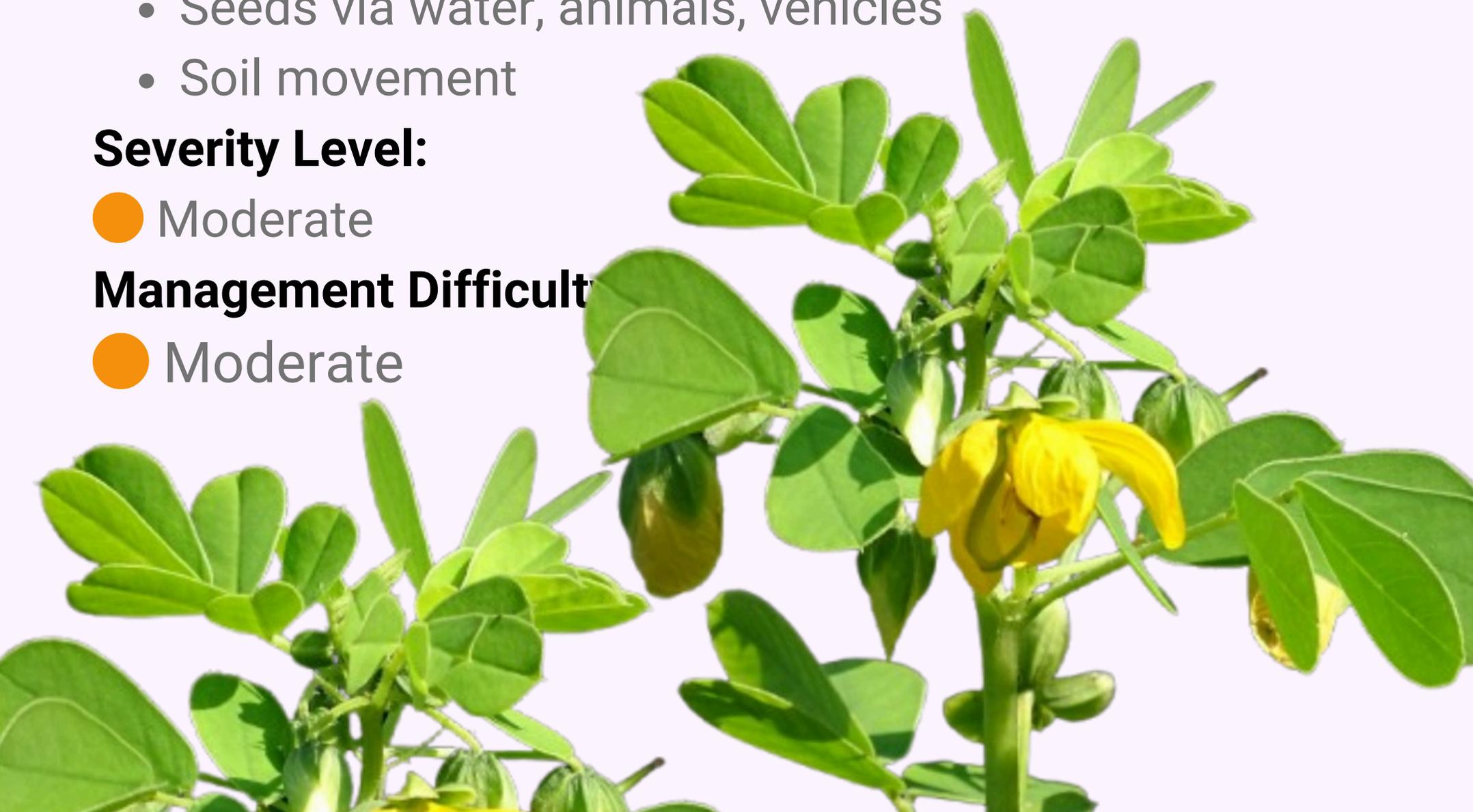
- Seeds via water, animals, vehicles
- Soil movement

**Severity Level:**

● Moderate

**Management Difficulty:**

● Moderate



# Cocklebur

## Xanthium strumarium



**Type:** Annual Herb

**Native to:** North America

### **Presence in India:**

- Spread across India plains, riverbanks, agricultural fields

### **Why is it harmful:**

- Competes with crops (soybean, maize, cotton)
- **Seeds have hooked burs harmful to livestock skin & wool**
- Toxic to young animals

### **How it spreads:**

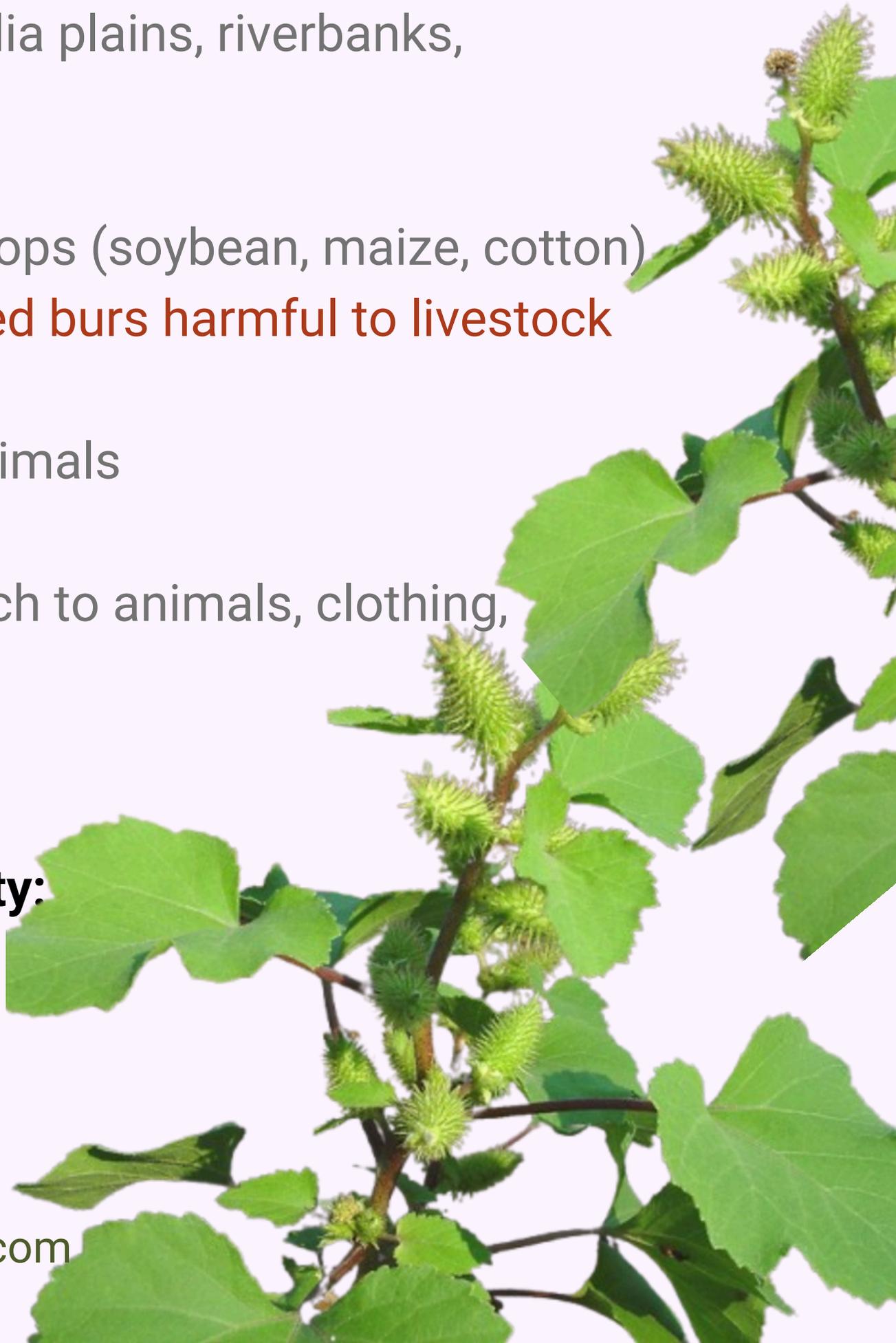
- Hooked burs attach to animals, clothing, machinery

### **Severity Level:**

● Moderate - High

### **Management Difficulty:**

● Moderate



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