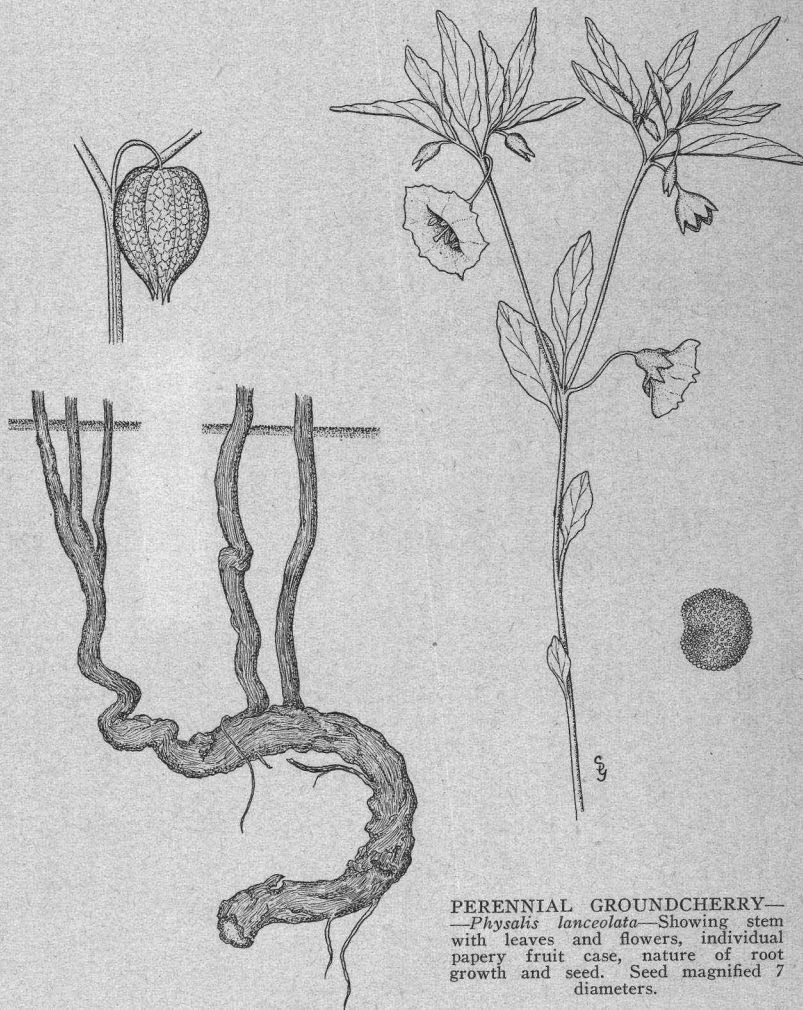


2457

Perennial Groundcherry

LAWRENCE JENKINS

E. R. JACKMAN



PERENNIAL GROUNDCHERRY—
Physalis lanceolata—Showing stem
with leaves and flowers, individual
papery fruit case, nature of root
growth and seed. Seed magnified 7
diameters.

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Perennial Groundcherry

(*Physalis lanceolata*)

By LAWRENCE JENKINS and E. R. JACKMAN*

Illustrations by Cathrine Davis Young

Perennial groundcherry, a member of the nightshade or potato family, is a deep-rooted perennial weed that reproduces by seed and rootstocks. It is not generally distributed in the state. Because of its nature of growth and persistent rootstocks, it could become a serious pest unless controlled. Perennial groundcherry has been observed growing on cultivated land, meadows, pastures, and waste places. It generally grows from 1 to 2 feet tall and branches freely, giving the plant a bushy appearance. Stems are fine, slightly angled, and weak. As the plant matures, the weight of the foliage bends the stems over, often to the ground. Leaves are lance-shaped, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 inches long. The lower leaves are commonly smooth along the margins, while the upper ones have somewhat wavy edges. Flowers are about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch across, dull yellow with greenish-brown centers. Fruit is enclosed in a papery, heart-shaped container that is frequently about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and has 5 points along the tipped rim. This covering has 10 prominent ribs running lengthwise with netting between. Rootstocks are large and tough and often grow deep in the ground, making eradication difficult. The berries are reddish yellow, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter, and similar to a tomato in structure. Seed is borne inside the berry, is about the same size as that of alfalfa and clover, and is occasionally found with those seeds.

Control. Only limited work has been done on the control of this weed. Carbon bisulphide applied at the rate of 2 ounces per hole with the holes 18 inches apart in staggered rows has given good results. Sodium chlorate applied in the fall at the rate of 5 pounds to the square rod has been satisfactory in most cases. It will take one, and in some cases, two seasons of cultivation to suppress this persistent weed. It blooms from July to September. Therefore, an annual hay crop could be harvested from the land followed by plowing the infested area and summer fallowing for the balance of the season. This should control the pest within 2 or 3 years without the loss of a crop. Additional control methods are discussed in Extension Bulletin 510.

This is one of a series of 39 bulletins discussing 58 perennial weeds in Oregon and their control. A list of bulletins in this series will be found on the last page of Extension Bulletin 510. The individual bulletins are punched so that several may be bound together if desired.

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* E. R. Jackman is Extension Specialist in Farm Crops and Lawrence Jenkins is Assistant Extension Specialist in Farm Crops at Oregon State College.