

Horsenettle

Solanum carolinense L.

Family: Solanaceae (Nightshade family)

Life cycle: Perennial, reproducing by seed, rhizomes and adventitious buds on roots.

Habitat: Crop fields, pastures

General description: Erect, branched plant reaching heights of 2 to 3 ft. Stems have sharp spines. Leaves are egg shaped with wavy margins or 2 to 5 shallow lobes; sharp spines on bottom of leaf midrib. Flowers occur in clusters, five fused white to violet petals with a cone of bright yellow stamens. Fruit are smooth yellow berries (1/2 in diameter).

Key ID traits: Spines on stems and underside of leaf midribs.

Similar species: The general growth habit is similar to the groundcherries, but the spines on horsenettle make identification easy.

Miscellaneous: Like most members of the Solanaceae family, all plant parts contain toxic alkaloids. Toxicity of berries decrease as they mature.

