Fireweed

Today on Gardening in a Minute: fireweed.

Fireweed is a common weed that can inflict intense pain when handled, which is why it’s also called burning nettle.

It’s native to the Southeast, and doesn’t immediately call attention to itself, with leaves that look similar to those of strawberries but much smaller.

Fireweed can grow to three feet in height, but is usually about one foot tall. It’s problematic because of the stinging hairs along the stem, which can cause burning welts.

Mowing doesn’t destroy fireweed -- in fact it probably helps scatter the seeds, ensuring the plant’s spread. Fireweed does die back naturally in hot weather. But in cooler weather, herbicides are the only way to control this potentially painful pest. You can also hand-pull the weed -- but make sure to wear gloves!

For more about fireweed and many other gardening topics, contact your county extension office or visit Gardening in a Minute dot com.

Gardening in a Minute is a production of the University of Florida’s Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology, IFAS Extension, and WUFT-FM.