

The View from Shepherd's Knoll ...



Pokeweed



Canadian Thistle



Sumac

Pest Purgation for Productive Pasture

The day was hot; the job was tough. My two daughters and I were working on a three-quarter acre neglected hillside pasture lot on a part of Shepherd's Knoll trying to purge three farming pests—pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*), Canadian thistles (*Cirsium arvense*), and sumac (*Rhus typhina*) sprouts. Of special concern was pokeweed because the plant is a known toxin to agricultural animals. While our children have been taught not to sample the pretty but poisonous dark blue berries, sheep and calves are not so well trained! After some prolonged work, we removed the last traces of pokeweed and thistles. However hundreds of sumac sprouts varying from two to twenty feet in height still dominated much of the pasture. Looking at the growth, I decided that it was time to try a biological cure by buying some goats and putting them in this lot. As natural browsers, goats find tree sprouts to be delectable treats and typically prefer them above many pasture grasses. With the removal of the weed pests, bluegrass and fescue will thrive and the pasture will be much more productive.

My personal weeds of sin are not so readily removed. I frequently try to cover them. This hiding attempt provides the soil base for numerous new sin sprouts, rather than allowing the "hoe of the Lord" to remove the weedy root and thereby purifying the landscape of my heart. The apostle John writes: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, NIV). May the Lord eradicate the weeds within me so that productive pasture grasses can grow.

We have an abundance of varied articles in this issue. Topics include ecology, theology, philosophy, molecular biology, biblical interpretation, creation, and history of science. The book reviews assist readers to discern which choices are most delectable to sample. I trust that you will not find any "weeds" in *PSCF*'s pasture, but only nutritional grasses.

May you experience jocund reading,
Roman J. Miller, editor