

NOXIOUS WEED FACT SHEET

Blueweed (*Echium vulgare*)



FAMILY: BORAGINACEAE



Description:

Blueweed is a biennial or short-lived perennial that grows from a long, woody taproot to approximately 3 feet tall. Stems are unbranched and covered with stiff, bristly hairs that have swollen, red, purple or black bases, giving the stems a spotted appearance.

Leaves are lance-shaped and covered with stiff hairs. They are alternating and grow to about 8 inches long and 1 inch wide at the base, growing progressively smaller up the plant.

Bright blue (sometimes purple or pink) funnel-shaped flowers are arranged on the upper side of short stems in a fiddleneck coil that elongates after flowering.

Flowering occurs June to August, seeds maturing about a month after bloom. Seeds are produced in a four-part nutlet that is very hard, each plant may produce 500 to 2,000 seeds that can remain viable in the soil for several years. The seeds are produced in a four-part nutlet that is very hard and long-lived.

Habitat:

Blueweed can invade lawns, ornamental areas, rangeland, pastures and roadsides. It thrives in sunny sites and does not tolerate shade. In Spokane County, it can be found primarily in the Nine Mile and Seven Mile areas.

Control Methods:

The most effective control of Blueweed is prevention. Above all, prevent plants from going to seed.

Cultural Control — Because Blueweed has been grown as an ornamental garden plant in the past, be sure to review the contents of wildflower mixes to avoid accidental introduction, avoid using mixes with unidentified seed components entirely. To prevent plants from spreading from known infestations, carefully clean vehicles, boots, clothing and pets after visiting infested areas.

Plant competition is a good tool that is often overlooked and should be the first used. Restoring disturbed sites to prevent weed reoccurrences and provide competition to the weeds is essential.



Mechanical Control — If there are only a few plants, hand pulling can be effective, but will need to be done throughout the growing season, remember to always wear gloves. For larger infestations, you will need to mow or cultivate.

If you mow, wait until the stalks are tall, right before the flowers appear. Additional mowing will be required later in the summer.

Cultivating will need to be repeated several times during the growing season; thoroughly cutting the roots of the plant every time.

Chemical Control — Spraying with a residual, broadleaf herbicide before the plant flowers will help control this plant, plus prevent some of the seeds in the soil from germinating.

Because the hairs on the leaves make it difficult for herbicides to stay on the plant, you will need to add a surfactant to increase coverage.



Recommended herbicides: (Always add a surfactant to spray mix)

May, June <i>Seedling/Rosette</i>	July <i>Bolting, Bud, Bloom</i>	August, September, October <i>Flowering, Seed, Fall Regrowth</i>
2,4-D	Tordon* + 2,4-D	Tordon + 2,4-D
WeedMaster, Range Star, Rifle D	Escort + Dicamba + 2,4-D	Regrowth after mowing:
Brazen	WeedMaster	WeedMaster
Telar	Brazen	Telar

* **Tordon®** is the trade name for picloram and is a restricted use herbicide.

Read and follow all label instructions when applying herbicides. Trade names have been used to simplify instructions and no endorsement or warranty is expressed or implied.



Blueweed rosette: hairy leaves are covered with small white bumps



Spokane County Noxious Weed Control Board

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For additional information on Noxious Weeds and the State Weed Law, visit our website at:
www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard