Scientific Name: *Hieracium aurantiacum* L.

Common Name: Orange hawkweed, devil's-paintbrush, red daisy, flameweed, devil's-weed, and grim-the-coller.

Family: Compositae

Legal Status: Class B:  
(a) regions 3, 6, 9, 10  
(b) Clallam County of region 1.  
(c) Skagit County of region 2.  
(d) Ferry County of region 4.  
(e) Thurston and King Counties of region 5.  
(f) Lincoln and Adams Counties of region 7.

Description and Variation: Orange hawkweed has matted hairy leaves and showy flower heads, each about an inch in diameter and usually red on the margin, merging into an orange-colored center. The flowering branches, or shoots, grow from a few inches to 2 feet in height; they are leafless and covered with stiff black hairs.

Economic Importance: Orange hawkweed is an aggressive competitor of pasture and range plant species. Orange hawkweed is unpalatable and thus crowds out more palatable species.

Geographical Distribution: This species is widely distributed in northeastern Washington with the largest known population in Pend Oreille County. It is also reported from northwestern Washington.

Habitat: Orange hawkweed occurs in permanent meadows, grasslands, range and pastures.

History: Orange hawkweed was first introduced from Europe into New England because of its attractive flame-colored flowers. Originally it was a garden ornamental. This species was introduced to Spokane in 1945. It continues to be spread around by wildflower enthusiasts and sometimes shows up for sale in nurseries.

Growth and Development: Orange hawkweed is a perennial.

Reproduction: This species can spread by seeds, stolons, and/or rhizomes.

Response to Herbicides: Early season treatment with picloram, combinations of picloram plus 2,4-D or dicamba mixed with 2,4-D can be effective in controlling the hawkweed. 2,4-D alone is inadequate. See current herbicide labels and recommendations for herbicide doses to be used.
Response to Cultural Method: In scattered patches of small size, the simplest mode of attack is to dig them out, making sure that all of the below-ground growth is also removed, since even a small piece may develop into a new plant. Plants removed should be carried away and either burned or placed in a refuse pile where they can do no harm.

Biocontrol Potentials:

Dr. Joe McCaffrey at the University of Idaho is currently investigating potential hawkweed biocontrol agents.

References:


Notes:

*H. aurantiacum* is considered one of the most noxious weeds in the New England states, as reflected by common names such as King Devil and Devil's Paintbrush. In our area, Hitchcock and Cronquist reports it only as "West of the Cascades in Washington and in Flathead County Montana". Other sources, however, show *H. aurantiacum* to be widely distributed in NE Washington, with the worst of the known infestation occurring in Pend Oreille County. A note by Marion Ownbey at the W.S.U. herbarium shows this species to have been introduced at Spokane in 1945.

*H. aurantiacum* is a serious pest of lowland pasture, mountain meadows, and lawns. It is often cosmopolitan (found in cities) because the unwary wildflower enthusiast has been known to bring it home as an ornamental.

See further notes under *H. caespitosum*. 