

Blueweed (*Viper's bugloss*)

Echium vulgare

Borage Family

Key identifying traits

- ❑ Blue flowers with pink stamens arranged on the upper side of short, scorpion-tail stems; as the stem straightens flowers open a few at a time, stalk to tip
- ❑ Stems and leaves are covered with stiff hairs which are swollen at the base
- ❑ Swellings have a reddish or blackish tint giving the stem a flecked appearance
- ❑ Single stalks or multiple branches 1-3 feet tall

Biology and Ecology

- Biennial to short-lived, tap-rooted perennial
- Reproduces by seed and can regrow from crown
- Flowers June through early fall
- Seeds are produced in a four-part nutlet and are very hard and long-lived
- Thrives in sunny sites-does not tolerate shade
- Invades lawns, ornamental areas, roadsides and range land

Control

Prevention- learn to identify plant; know your property; beware of fill dirt, hay and seed from outside your area

Biological- no known biological controls approved for Blueweed at this time

Cultural- competitive vegetation helps; keep lawns healthy (water/feed) to increase the vigor of turf and reduce open spaces for invasion

Mechanical- mowing can stop seed production in short term, but plants can re-grow and bloom shorter than the cutting blade; digging or pulling when soil conditions are moist is effective-control prior to bloom or, if after, bag or burn plants in a pile as appropriate (check local ordinances); seed bank will be present for years

Chemical- several herbicides are effective at label rates; best timing is in early spring when plants are in the rosette stage

Where found- common in the extreme southeastern portion of Stevens County, with only minor outbreaks elsewhere.



digging mature blueweed



blueweed rosette-bumpy



blueweed flowers