



COMMON BUGLOSS

Anchusa officinalis (an-KOO-suh oh-fiss-ih-NAH-liss)



Photo by Leo Michels

- ✦ Other names: Common alkanet
- ✦ Common Bugloss is a Class B Designate weed.
- ✦ Common Bugloss is a deep-rooted perennial herb in the Boraginaceae Family (Bor-AJ-in-nee-see-ee) that spreads by seed.
- ✦ It ranges from 1 to 2 feet tall, with several flowering stems, bearing fleshy, succulent leaves and stalks which are covered with stiff hairs. The leaves are narrow, slightly pointed and progressively smaller as they grow up the stem. Its small flowers are blue to purple in color with a white center and grow on the end of the stems. Each flower produces a four chambered nutlet, each chamber contains one seed. It has a deep, stout taproot. Common bugloss forms a basal rosette in the first year, and a single flowering stalk the second year.

Multiple stalks appear in succeeding years. A single plant may produce up to 900 seeds per year.

- ✦ The bristly hairs of this plant can cause skin irritation. This plant contains *pyrrolizidine alkaloid*, the same alkaloid found in Tansy Ragwort, though in much smaller amounts. In larger doses *pyrrolizidine alkaloid* causes liver damage leading to cirrhosis of the liver.
- ✦ Common Bugloss grows in sandy, gravelly soils. It competes with more desirable vegetation such as native plants and crops. It invades alfalfa fields, pastures, and waste areas. Its fleshy stalks can cause hay bales to mold. Since the seeds of this plant may remain dormant for many years, it can become a persistent weed problem.

CONTROL OPTIONS

- ✦ The most effective control of Common Bugloss is prevention. Above all, prevent plants from going to seed.





- ✦ Large, woody tap roots make Common Bugloss very difficult to remove manually. Small infestations can be dug out with a pick or mattock, removing as much root as possible. Be careful to dispose of all the pieces of roots and crown to prevent them from re-establishing.
- ✦ Spot spraying at bud stage, prior to blooming with an herbicide containing *glyphosate* or *2, 4 D* (such as Weedmaster and many others) is effective in controlling Common Bugloss.
- ✦ When using herbicides, read and follow all label instructions and obey all label precautions. (Note:

pesticide product registration is renewed annually and product names and formulations may vary from year to year.)

