

ORANGE HAWKWEED: Options for control

Orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*), is a **class-B** noxious weed in Lincoln County, Washington. It is a perennial plant of the sunflower family, originates from Europe, and is also known as Devil's-paintbrush, Red daisy, Flameweed, and Devil's weed.

Orange hawkweed is characterized by a single, leafless stem (occasionally one or two small leaves may be present on the stem), which is approximately 12 inches tall and covered with stiff black hairs. The oblong or lance-shaped basal leaves are also hairy, and measure about 4½ inches in length. Both stems and leaves exude a harmless milky sap when broken. Each stem terminates with a cluster of ray-type flowers that are characteristically red on the margin merging into an orange center. The bright orange-red flowers, each measuring about ½ inch in diameter, are



Spreads by seed and by above-ground stolons (like strawberries), capable of producing several new plants.



Basal leaves are oblong, hairy and about 4 1/2 inches in length.



Pre-flowering hawkweed has dark colored, tightly clustered flower buds and fine hairs on the leaves and

hiking", and are often moved in contaminated soil associated with transplanting new plants into gardens and flowerbeds. Seeds remain viable in soil for up to 7 years and infested areas often form extensive seed banks. The roots are shallow and fibrous with above ground stolons (runners) and below ground rhizomes that allow for aggressive vegetative reproduction. Stolons originate from buds in the rosette when the plants flower. These runners radiate out from the original plant and form new rosettes where they touch down and take root. Under ideal conditions, one orange hawkweed plant can spread and infest an area 2-3 feet in diameter in its first year of growth.



easily distinguished from other flowers by their notch-tipped, square-edged petals. Each flower produces 12-30 tiny, ribbed, black seeds flattened at one end. Seeds can be dispersed by wind, water, or "hitch-

Orange hawkweed is reported to be allelopathic (inhibits other plants by producing toxic chemicals in the surrounding soil). Once established, orange hawkweed can quickly develop into a patch that continues to expand until it covers the site with a solid mat of rosettes, forming a monoculture.

Areas that contain vigorously growing grasses appear to be less susceptible to the spread of hawkweed.



Stems are single, leafless, approximately 12 inches tall and covered with stiff black hairs.



Bright orange flowers are easily distinguished by their notch-tipped, square-edged petals.

Key identifying traits

- Several red-orange **flower heads** per stem arranged in an **umbrella like cluster**.
- **Flower petals** are strap-shaped with **notched tips**.
- **Leaves** are mostly basal, and **bristly hairs**.
- **Stems** about 12 inches tall, with **stiff black glandular hairs** and only occasional small leaves.
- The **entire plant** contains a harmless, **milky latex sap**
- Develops above ground runners, **like strawberry plants**.

Biology and ecology

- A **perennial** spread by windborne seeds, below ground rhizomes and above ground stolons.
- Can form near **monocultures** with few other plants apparent on the dominated sites.
- Tolerates shade but **thrives** in open meadows.
- Has fibrous **root system** and slender rhizomes
- **Flowers** in late June and July.
- Reported to be **allelopathic**.



Under ideal conditions, can spread and infest an area 2-3 ft. in diameter in its first year .

CONTROL MEASURES:

For this and other publications, see our website at: www.co.lincoln.wa.us/weedboard

Prevention:

- Beware of contaminated fill dirt, hay and seed from outside your area.
- **Early detection** is vital to prevent invasion.

Biological:

- None available at this time, research is on going.

Cultural:

- In scattered patches of small size, the easiest method is to dig them out, making sure that all of the below-ground growth is removed, since even the tiniest piece may develop into a new plant.

Mechanical:

- Will not withstand regular tillage, but care must

be taken to pick up any stolons and rhizomes, as they can quickly re-sprout.

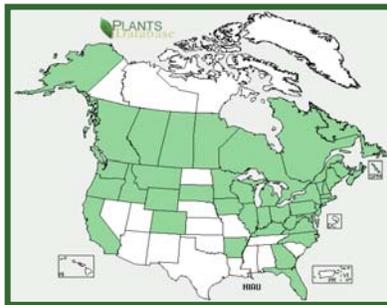
- Cutting and pulling are **ineffective** unless done with frequency and diligence to eliminate re-growth.
- **Mowing is not recommended.** Mowed plants respond by quickly flowering again.

Chemical:

- Early season treatment with Picloram, combinations of Picloram plus 2,4-D can be effective in controlling the hawkweed.
- Milestone in rosette to bolting stage.
- 2,4-D **alone** is **inadequate**.
- For best results, **use a surfactant**.
- **Read the label** instructions before applying.



Orange hawkweed is very effective at exploiting over utilized areas. It does not do well in dense healthy forage stands. To ensure that pastures remain free of orange hawkweed, maintain a competitive condition through moderate grazing, fertilization and variety selection. Fertilizing light infestations with ammonium sulphate may reduce hawkweed density and vigor due to an increase in grass and forb competition.



The ability of Orange hawkweed to invade and take over pristine mountain meadows is remarkable. Once it gains a foothold in a favorable area, its huge system of creeping roots and stems, enable it to choke out competing vegetation and to form dense stands in just a few years. Orange hawkweed also infests pastures, hay fields, roadsides and lawns.

Photos and references courtesy of: Colorado Dept. of Ag; King County Noxious Weed Control; Washington state NWCB, Written findings; Stevens County Noxious Weed Board, Central Kootney, Linda Wilson, University of Idaho; Invasive Plant Committee; Rich Old, XID Services; Tom Heutte & Michael Shephard, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org; Plants Database.

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