



# Meadow Hawkweed

*Hieracium caespitosum*

Alberta Regulation:  
Weed Act



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commanster.eu

## Overview:

Meadow hawkweed is a member of the Aster Family native to Europe. It is a fibrous rooted, perennial herb with a milky latex in the stems and leaves. Hawkweeds reproduce by seeds and vegetatively by numerous horizontal stolons, and rhizomes underground.<sup>1</sup> Seeds are produced by apomixis - asexually - as non-native hawkweeds are polyploids (n=9), as opposed to the native diploid hawkweeds.<sup>1</sup> Occasional sexual reproduction occurs.<sup>1</sup>

Hawkweeds develop a low rosette of basal leaves before producing a flowering stem. Dandelion-like flowers are borne at the ends of stems.

Non-native hawkweeds exhibit many characteristics of an invasive plant: high seed production and germination rates, asexual seed production, wind-dispersed seed, vegetative reproduction via rhizomes, stolons, and root fragments, and rapid growth.<sup>1</sup> A few invasive hawkweed species are popular ornamentals. All of these characteristics facilitate rapid colonization and monopolizing of resources. An undetected patch of hawk-

weed has great potential to become an un-eradicable infestation.

## Habitat:

Hawkweeds prefer well drained, coarse textured soils, moderately low in organic matter, in mesic habitats.<sup>1</sup> It can successfully grow under coniferous forest canopy.

## Identification:

**Stems:** Are erect, solitary, and bear simple, glandular and stellate hairs.<sup>2</sup> Plants grow 20-70 cm.<sup>1</sup> Stolons are sometimes short and inconspicuous.<sup>1</sup>

**Leaves:** Basal leaves are oblong/lance-shaped to spoon-shaped, and 5-25 cm long 1-3 cm wide. Basal leaves are persistent and have petioles.<sup>2</sup> The upper leaf surfaces bear long simple hairs and few to none stellate hairs. The lower surfaces bear moderately dense stellate and long simple hairs.<sup>1</sup> Leaf margins may be entire or minutely toothed.<sup>2</sup>

**Flowers:** Yellow ray flowers are borne in compact, flat-topped clusters of 20-50.<sup>1</sup> In-

volucral bracts are lance-shaped, 5-9 mm tall, not graduated, and bear many simple and glandular hairs, and a few stellate hairs.<sup>2</sup> Achenes are 1.5-2 mm long, with a dirty-white pappus.<sup>2</sup>

## Prevention:

Learning to recognize hawkweeds from the many yellow-flowered members of the Aster Family is key to prevention. Hairs are an important characteristic of non-native hawkweeds and also in distinguishing between species. Stolons facilitate rapid colonization of a patch of ground. Long term management of hawkweeds requires maintaining healthy forbs and grasses - fertilization of desirable vegetation can result in out-competition of hawkweeds. Re-seed disturbance in areas susceptible to hawkweed invasion.

## Control:

**Grazing:** Unknown. Invasive plants should never be considered as forage.

**Mechanical:** Mowing before flowering will prevent seed production of taller plants

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but will not inhibit reproduction via stolons and rhizomes. Hand digging of small infestations where all stolons and root can be removed may be effective. Root fragments can generate new plants, therefore any mechanical tilling/cultivation would be ineffective.

**Chemical:** Hexazinone, 2,4-D, and glyphosate are registered for use on *Hieracium* spp./hawkweeds. Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the target plant in Canada by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Consult your local Agricultural Fieldman or Certified Pesticide Dispenser for more information.

**Biological:** None researched to date.



Root mass

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development



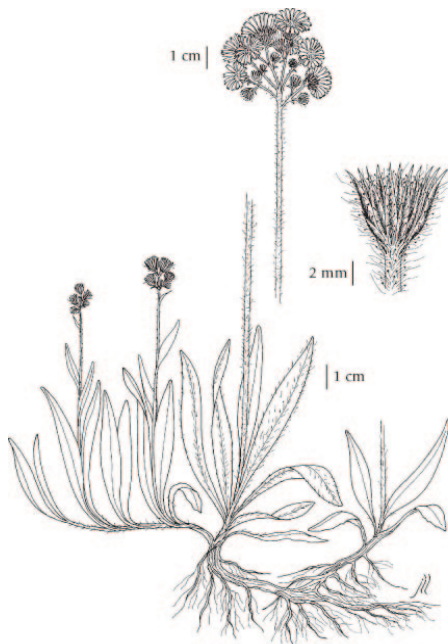
Leaves

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development



Juvenile plants

helen Anderson



The Illustrated Flora of British Columbia



## REFERENCES

- 1 Wilson, Linda. Key to Identification of Invasive and Native Hawkweeds in the Pacific Northwest. British Columbia Ministry of Forests and Range, Forest Practices Branch, Invasive Alien Plant Program.
- 2 *Hieracium caespitosum*. Electronic Atlas of the Flora of British Columbia. <http://ibis.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/eflora/> Accessed October 26, 2014.