

Blueweed

(*Echium vulgare*) Borage Family

Other Common Name(s):

Viper's-bugloss, Blue devil

General Description: Blueweed is a showy biennial to short-lived perennial introduced from Europe. It spreads only by seed, producing 500 to 2,000 seeds per plant. The name 'bugloss' is Greek for ox-tongue, which describes the roughness and shape of the leaves. The entire plant is conspicuously hairy. It typically occurs in rangelands, pastures, roadsides and idle areas where it prefers coarse, sandy to gravelly soils. It is a regionally noxious weed in the Cariboo, Central Kootenay, Columbia-Shuswap, Okanagan-Similkameen and Thompson-Nicola districts.



Stems:

- ◆ 0.6 to 1 m (2 to 3 ft) in height
- ◆ unbranched and covered in stiff hairs which are often swollen at the base
- ◆ swellings are reddish or blackish in colour giving the stem a flecked appearance

Leaves:

- ◆ lower leaves are stalked and grow to 25 cm (1 ft) long and 3 cm (1 in) wide
- ◆ stem leaves are progressively smaller with the upper leaves stalkless
- ◆ narrowly elliptical and covered with stiff hairs

Flowers:

- ◆ bloom in June-July
- ◆ change from a rose colour to a brilliant blue
- ◆ shaped like a funnel
- ◆ numerous curved spikes of closely wedged flowers on the upper side of short stems



Treatment:

- ◆ **Chemical control:** good control with spring or fall applications of picloram or 2,4-D Amine 500.
- ◆ **Physical control:** plants can be clipped to reduce seed production and hence spread potential; clipping can cause re-sprouting, so persistence will be required to deplete the roots.
- ◆ **Cultural control:** increasing competition should be encouraged where practical

Additional Notes:

- ◆ an unpalatable plant which crowds out beneficial species in grazing areas

Consult your local Ministry of Agriculture and Food office for the most current information on appropriate chemical controls. As with all pesticide treatment, herbicide applicators must handle and apply herbicides in a safe and responsible manner, as dictated by legislation and guidelines under the *Pesticide Control Act*.

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