



Ada County

Pest of the Month



OCTOBER
2012

**A quick guide to identifying and controlling
invasive plants and animals found in the county**

ORANGE HAWKWEED

Orange Hawkweed is a fibrous rooted perennial herb that grows 10-36 inches tall and is branched at the top to produce flower heads. Erect stems usually do not have leaves, contain a milky juice and are covered with stiff hairs. The base leaves are basal with 1 or 2 leaves measuring about 4 ½ inches in length. Orange-red flowers bloom from June until September. Each flower produces 12-30 tiny seeds that are dark brown or black, cylindrical, elongated, barbed and bristled. Seeds are dispersed by wind, water, or hitch-hiking in contaminated soil associated with transplanting new plants into gardens and flowerbeds. Seeds remain viable in soil for up to 7 years. The roots are shallow and fibrous with above ground stolons (runners) and below ground rhizomes that allow for aggressive vegetative reproduction. These runners radiate out from the original plant and form new rosettes where they touch down and take root.



Quick Facts



Orange hawkweed reproduces and spreads through prolific seed production as well as vegetatively through stolons and rhizomes. One plant can spread and infest an area 2–3 feet in diameter in its first year of growth. It forms extensive mats that can compete with forest plants. It is an aggressive competitor for space, light, and soil nutrients. It has been reported to be allelopathic, producing phytotoxic chemicals in pollen grains that inhibit seed germination, seeding emergence, or regeneration of other plants.

It invades different habitats including urban sites, moist meadows, pasture, hay fields, roadsides, gravel pits, forested areas, tree plantations and riparian areas. Plants prefer full sun or partial shade and soils that are well drained and coarse-textured.

Pliny, the Roman naturalist, believed that hawks fed on the plant to strengthen their eyesight and thus it became the Greek and Latin name for this and similar plants, called hawkweed.

See control methods on other side...

How to Control

Control Methods:

Prevention is the preferred method for control. To prevent spread of existing populations: carefully clean vehicles, boots, clothing, and pets after visiting an infested area.

- **Manual** - Mowing reduces seed production, but encourages vegetative spread. Hand pull or dig up small infestations. Dig deeply to remove below ground rhizomes and fibrous roots. Discard or burn plants.
- **Chemical** - It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as 2,4-D or dicamba before bloom. Follow label and state requirements.
- **Cultural Control** - Treatments such as fertilization can increase the competitive ability of more desirable plants, preventing hawkweeds from becoming established.

Source: USDA Forest Service



Note: Chemical control of any weed can be difficult and confusing. If you are not experienced in chemical control or do not understand the product label, you should consult a licensed applicator to assist you. Inappropriate application can kill desirable vegetation, and may violate federal law.



For questions and concerns, please contact:

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