

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant, but may have limited distribution in some counties

Meadow hawkweed
Hieracium pratense

Other common names: Yellow hawkweed, field hawkweed, king devil, yellow paintbrush, devil's paint brush, yellow devil, yellow fox-and-cubs

USDA symbol: CEDE5
ODA rating: B and T



Introduction: Meadow hawkweed is one of a large group of perennial hawkweeds that came to the United States from Europe. With the production of highly mobile seeds, stoloniferous roots and allelopathic compounds, this species is truly an aggressive invader. Containment efforts are underway across the state to reduce further colonization of this plant.

Distribution in Oregon: Meadow hawkweed is established in Wallowa, Union, and Clackamas Counties and occasionally emerges in other counties.

Description: Meadow hawkweed is a creeping perennial with shallow, fibrous roots and long rhizomes. Basal leaves are hairy on both sides and lie flat to the ground, overlapping and smothering other plants. Its stems and leaves exude milky juice when broken. The stems are bristly and usually leafless, although occasionally a small leaf appears near the midpoint. Stem height can reach to three feet tall and bear up to 30 half-inch diameter flower heads. Flowers are yellow and appear in May to July depending on elevation. After maturing, the shiny, black, plumed seeds are dispersed by wind, on clothing, hair, feathers, and vehicles.

Impacts: Plants of the hawkweed complex produce dense rosette mats preventing desirable plants from establishing or surviving. Hawkweeds dominate sites by out-competing other species for water, nutrients and by releasing allelopathic compounds from their decaying leaves. Plants grow well in moist grassy areas but do not tolerate deep shade. Hawkweeds are becoming troublesome in native meadows, prairies, pastures and lawns. Wilderness areas in the Pacific Northwest are at risk of invasion.

Biological controls: No approved biological control agents are available at this time.

