

HOUNDSTONGUE



BOTANICAL NAME: *Cynoglossum officinale*

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? Houndstongue is a biennial that forms a rosette (leaves near the ground in a circle with no visible stem) the first year. The second year the plant produces a single, hairy, course flowering stock which can grow 1 to 4 feet tall with a thick, black, woody taproot. The leaves are oblong and rough, like a hound's tongue. The flowers are small and reddish-purple and appear at the end of the stems.

WHERE DOES IT LIKE TO GROW?

Houndstongue plants generally are found along trails and roadsides, on the edge of wooded areas and in disturbed areas.

WHEN DOES IT BLOOM? Small, attractive reddish-purple flowers begin to appear in June and seeds are formed and dropped by the end of summer.

HOW DOES THIS PLANT SPREAD? Houndstongue reproduces only from seed, but can spread great distances because the barbs on the seed pod cling to clothing, machinery and animals. Each flower produces three to four seeds in a cluster which are flat and teardrop-shaped with a hard seed coat covered with barbs. Mature plants can produce up to 2,000 seeds. Seeds will germinate February to May.



CAUTION: *Houndstongue contains toxins that are especially toxic to cattle and horses. The plant is rarely eaten in the green state; however, animals will eat the dried plant in hay. Death in animals from houndstongue poisoning is due to severe, irreversible liver failure*

CONTROL: Houndstongue reproduces only by seed, so don't let it go to seed. The rosettes are easy to remove when the soil is wet in the fall and spring, try to get the taproot out with it. Once it has bolted and flowered, be careful as you pull it not to drop the seeds. See the reverse side for more information on mechanical, cultural, biological and chemical control options for Houndstongue. Also see our Chemical Treatment handout for more information on using herbicides.



Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control
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How to Control Houndstongue

Houndstongue is a biennial that reproduces by seed only. Control is achieved by preventing seed production.

Mechanical Digging/Pulling can give very effective control of Houndstongue as long as the root crown is severed. If the plants have flowered be sure to bag them securely so the seeds cannot escape and make their way back to soil.

Cultural The best long term weed control is to get your desirable native plants thriving. Killing weeds is only one step, you have to also replace them with something good. Seed and fertilize so your grass can take nutrients away from the weeds and not leave available open soil for new weeds to germinate.

Biological Several insects have been released as biological control agents for Houndstongue in the US. Contact Nezperce Biocontrol Center for more information. www.nezpercebiocontrolcenter.com

Chemical **Timing of chemical treatments for the rosette or early bolting stage is critical in controlling Houndstongue to prevent seed production.**

- **Metsulfuron Methyl** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Escort XP** and **MSM 60 DF**. It is broadleaf selective (safe on most grasses) and can be effective against Houndstongue if applied during the rosette to bolting stages.
- **Chlorsulfuron** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Telar XP**. It is a dry chemical that must be mixed into water and agitated. It is broadleaf selective and effective on Houndstongue if applied during bolting and early flowering stages.
- **2,4-D** is the active ingredient in many herbicide products including **Hardball**, **Weedar**, **Hi-Dep**, etc. It is broadleaf selective and can be effective against Houndstongue when the rosettes are growing actively in the spring.