



# Integrated Weed Management



Ministry of Agriculture,  
Food and Fisheries  
Plant Industry Branch  
Crop Protection Program

## Orange Hawkweed – (*Hieracium aurantiacum*)



Orange hawkweed is a fibrous-rooted perennial plant originating from Europe. Distinguishing characteristics include: a leafless stem with stiff, black, glandular hairs, milky juice, leaves mostly basal, above-ground runners (stolons) that root at the tips, unique orange-red flowers evident throughout the growing season.

Over 15 other hawkweed species exist in B.C. Most are native, yellow flowered species. Mouse-ear hawkweed (*H. pilosella*) is easily identified by its solitary yellow flower. Proper identification of the other introduced hawkweeds that produce multiple yellow flowers has proven difficult as species are separated by only tiny differences that vary with field conditions.

Large infestations of orange hawkweed exist in the Fraser Ft. George, Columbia-Shuswap and North Cariboo regions. Smaller infestations exist throughout B.C. from the Peace River district to the coast and east to the Kootenay regions. Orange hawkweed is found primarily on native meadows, forest openings, permanent pastures, hayfields, roadsides, right-of-ways and idle areas. Once established, it quickly develops into a patch that continues spreading by seed and under-surface lateral roots. Severe infestations will dominate the site with a solid mat of rosettes or seedlings. This weed prefers well-drained, coarse textured soils that are moderately low in organic matter. In the Cariboo however, it is also associated with high organic soils in riparian meadows. Soil sampling indicates that most orange hawkweed sites in B.C. are low to deficient in sulphur.

Orange Hawkweed is listed as “noxious” in *Schedule A – Part II Regional Weeds, B.C. Weed Control Act Regulations*.



*Yellow Hawkweed*

# Management Strategies

*Yellow Hawkweed*



*Orange Hawkweed*

❖ **Prevention.** Resource over-utilization encourages orange hawkweed to spread. Dense forage stands will compete with orange hawkweed. Ensure that pastures are maintained in a competitive condition through moderate grazing, fertilization and variety selection. Experience in B.C. has shown that fertilizing light infestations with ammonium sulphate results in reduced density and vigour of hawkweed due to increased grass/forb competition. Fertilizer applied to severe infestations containing few grasses or forbs will result in little or no effect. Seed bare soils to adapted perennial grasses or grass/legume mixtures. **DO NOT** use orange hawkweed as a garden ornamental, as is occasionally done! Control small patches **EARLY** to prevent expansion.

❖ **Physical.** Control small infestations by careful digging of rosette plants. Avoid breaking off the shallow roots as plants can quickly re-grow from root pieces. For this reason – pulling is seldom effective. Removal of flower stems prevents seed production, but repeated mowing can encourage vegetative growth. Heavily infested pastures/hayfields can be cultivated and rotated to an annual crop. Hawkweed is a poor competitor in annual cropping systems especially if combined with herbicide use.

❖ **Chemical.** Tordon 22K (picloram) at 2.25 L/ha (0.9 L/acre) or Grazon (picloram + 2,4-D) at 3.8 L/ha (1.5 L/acre) provide very good control of orange hawkweed. Research trials in south-central B.C. indicate that both herbicides perform best when applied in spring or early summer during active weed growth.

❖ **Biological.** Research is currently underway in Europe and the United States to determine the feasibility of using natural biological control for the weedy hawkweeds. Currently, no biological agents are available.



*Orange Hawkweed used as an “ornamental”*



*Pasture Infestation*