



Meadow Hawkweed's bristly stem. Tom Heutte, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Meadow hawkweed (*Hieracium pretense*), orange hawkweed (*H. aurantiacum*), mouse-ear hawkweed (*H. pilosella*), yellow hawkweed (*H. floribundum*), kind-devil hawkweed (*H. piloselloides*)

DESCRIPTION

Hawkweeds can be very difficult to correctly identify, since they can hybridize freely with both native and other non-native hawkweeds. Generally, hawkweeds are dandelion-like weeds with yellow or orange flower heads and are bristly or hairy all over. Stems exude a milky juice when broken. Flower heads are borne either singularly at the top of the stem or in clusters. Young plants form rosettes of **lance-shaped** leaves. Most exotic hawkweeds have **stolons (aboveground lateral stems)**, which allow for aggressive vegetative reproduction. Most of the native hawkweeds do not have stolons; however some non-native hawkweeds also lack them. Most often, the bristly hairs (its type and abundance) located on the plants are used to distinguish between hawkweed species.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- dandelion-like plants with multiple flower heads (yellow or orange)
- bristly hairs located on the stems
- presence of stolons

WHEN TO FIND HAWKWEEDS

Hawkweeds can be found during their flowering period, from late May/early June through to September.

WHERE TO FIND HAWKWEEDS

Hawkweeds are found predominantly in open fields, mountain meadows, clearings in forest zones, and along roadsides. They can also be found in permanent pastures, cleared timber units, abandoned farmland, or other modified habitats where the soil is well-drained, coarse-textured, and moderately low in organic matter.

WHAT TO DO

Do not attempt to dig it out unless you are absolutely certain of its identification and that you can completely remove all of the below-ground parts.

Hawkweeds

Hieracium sp.

Hawkweeds were introduced to the United States from Europe as herbal remedies and ornamentals. They are now found throughout the country, but pose a particular threat to the Pacific Northwest, as much of the PNW is very susceptible to hawkweed invasion. Fortunately most hawkweeds are not yet abundant in Oregon.

Hawkweeds reproduce primarily by seed and can produce many seeds that disperse long distances by wind. However, hawkweeds may also spread vegetatively through **stolons**, regenerating from root fragments, root buds, rhizomes or stolons, so any manual or mechanical control efforts need to be very thorough. Human activity can easily spread plant fragments.

Hawkweeds can produce dense mats of rosettes that prevent native species from establishing or surviving. They dominate sites by out-competing other species for water and nutrients and by releasing **alleopathic compounds** (toxic chemicals) from their decaying leaves. Large infestations are generally only successfully eradicated through herbicide treatments.

At Tom McCall Preserve, you are most likely to find **meadow hawkweed**. Meadow hawkweed has stolons, and can best be distinguished by its bristly and almost-leafless stem (although an occasional leaf might grow near the stems midpoint) and its flat-topped cluster of yellow flower heads. Its flowers appear May through July, depending on elevation.

REFERENCES

Wilson, Linda M. (2006). Key to Identification of Invasive and Native Hawkweeds (*Hieracium* sp.) in the Pacific Northwest. B.C. Min. For. Range, For. Prac. Br., Kamloops, B.C.

Meadow Hawkweed. (n.d.) Retrieved February 26, 2007, from Oregon Department of Agriculture's Web site: <http://oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS>

Hawkweed spp. BMP. (July, 2005). Retrieved February 26, 2007 from King County Noxious Weed Control Program's Web site: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/lands/weeds/>



Meadow Hawkweed's flower cluster. Tom Forney, Oregon Department of Agriculture.