

Viper's Bugloss (Blueweed) Fact Sheet

Echium vulgare

Boraginaceae Family



<http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au>



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Inspection.gc.ca

Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** Abundant flowers are funnel-shaped and bright blue to purple in color. Flowers also have external hairs.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Seeds are 0.8-0.12 in. (2-3 mm) long, brownish grey in color, have a rough texture, and an elongated triangular shape. Seeds can remain viable for several years in the soil.
- ❸ **Leaves:** Leaves are oblanceolate and have white 'speckles' that give them a dimpled appearance. They can also have relatively long white hairs.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** Flowering occurs June to August, seeds maturing about a month after bloom.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Viper's Bugloss is a biennial that spends its first year as a small, flowerless rosette. In the late summer of its second year, the plant produces flowers, with seeds following a month later. The plant then dies off the following winter.

Impacts:

- Viper's Bugloss has been known to act as a secondary host for multiple floral diseases and can spread them throughout an area.
- Viper's Bugloss contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids that can prove fatal to cattle if ingested in large quantities.
- Viper's Bugloss is primarily seed spread and can easily travel long distances by hitchhiking on vehicles and clothing.



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Control:

- Small infestations of Viper's Bugloss can be effectively controlled by manually pulling and disposing in the trash.
- There are currently no biological control agents approved for use against Viper's Bugloss in the US.
- Chemical control can be effective against Viper's Bugloss if applied prior to flowering and seed production.

*Please visit our website for references sourcing this information.



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