

# Hawkweeds

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Orange hawkweed and three yellow-flowered hawkweeds (referred to as the meadow hawkweed complex) are rapidly invading northwestern Montana. Exotic hawkweeds are stoloniferous, so they form dense mats instead of individual plants, and usually do not have stem leaves. Native hawkweeds are not stoloniferous and usually have some stem leaves.



Orange hawkweed infests a moist meadow in northwest Montana

## Exotic Hawkweed Characteristics

- The plants in the vegetative stage are a basal rosette with many hairy leaves.
- Each rosette produces 10-30 bristly-haired, mostly leafless stems, 10-36 inches tall, that branch only at the top to produce flower heads.
- The inflorescence consists of 5-30 dandelion-like flowers,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch in diameter.
- The plants produce 4-12 leafy stolons that resemble strawberry runners. The stolon tips develop into small rosettes that become the next generation of plants. They form dense mats of solid hawkweed, crowding out native vegetation.



## Hawkweed Management Techniques

### Prevention

- Preventing the introduction of weeds is the most effective and cost-effective method of control.
- Minimizing disturbance and controlling spread vectors are effective in keeping your land weed free.

### Early Detection

- Detecting and eradicating small infestations will prevent hawkweeds from becoming established. As infestations become larger, they become more difficult to control.

### Physical or Mechanical Control

- Mowing reduces seed production, but encourages vegetative spread.
- Disturbance by digging, machinery or grazing animals, that disturbs the rhizomes or stolens, enhances the rate of spread.

### Chemical Control

- Clopyralid & 2,4-D or triclopyr & 2,4-D at 1 ½ -2 qt/ac or picloram at 1 qt/ac, applied early in spring or late in the fall.
- A surfactant should be used to help the herbicide adhere to the hairy surfaces of hawkweed leaves and stems.

### Cultural Control

- Treatments such as fertilization can increase the competitive ability of more desirable plants, preventing hawkweeds from becoming established.

### Biological Control

- Currently no approved agents, but testing is being conducted.



Exotic hawkweeds are rhizomatous and form solid, dense mat that crowds out native vegetation.

### Additional Information

For additional information concerning exotic hawkweeds contact your local county weed coordinator or refer to one of the following web sites ([www.mtweed.org](http://www.mtweed.org)) (<http://mtwow.org>) ([www.oneplan.org](http://www.oneplan.org)).

Another source of information is the Hawkweed Task Force. The task force is a group of concerned counties, private companies and state and federal land managers. Their mission is to promote awareness, education and proper management techniques of this new invasive threat. For more information about the task force, call Deena Shotzberger at the U.S. Forest Service, 406-293-7773.

### USDA Forest Service

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