

Rush Skeletonweed

(*Chondrilla juncea* L.)



Description: Rush Skeletonweed is a deep rooted perennial plant that spreads by lateral roots and air borne seeds. Most seeds germinate in the fall forming a basal rosette of dandelion like leaves. In spring, short stems emerge, covered with course red-brown hairs. As stalks grow, they develop open spreading branches with few, long, narrow leaves. Often the leaves on the stalk and at the base die back as flowering begins.

First year plants have few stalks with more developing during successive years. The plants also spread from lateral roots, allowing a single plant to become a colony.

Anywhere from one to five yellow flowers develop in the axils of leaves from mid to late summer. Each flower only lasts a day but successive flowers occur until hard frost. Seeds mature after only 8 -14 days and can germinate almost immediately as soon as moisture is available.

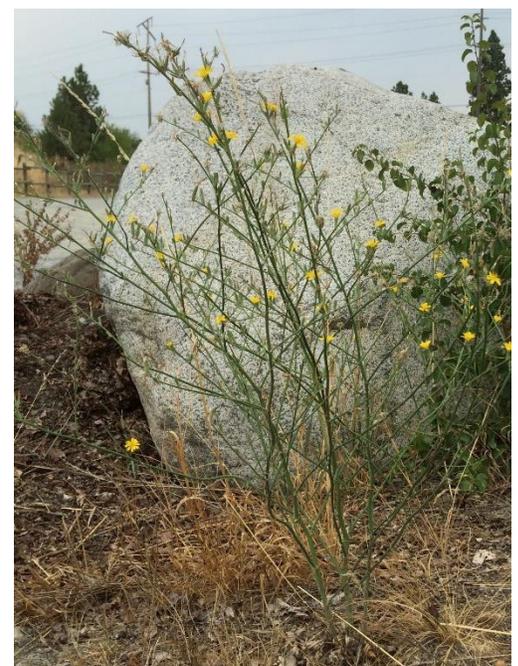
Each plant can produce as up to 2,500 seeds and colonies up to many as 70,000 seeds. Seeds remain viable for less than 2 years.

Habitat: It is thought that Rush Skeletonweed was introduced from Europe around the 1920s as a contaminate of apple rootstock. It has adapted readily to our climate and soil types becoming a serious invader of crop, pasture, range, forest lands and roadsides. As an aggressive invader, it will establish in intact plant communities as well as disturbed sites.

Control Methods: *Early detection is vital to prevent invasion and establishment of this or other weeds. Above all, prevent plants from going to seed. Using several control methods will increase the likelihood of reducing infestations to acceptable levels.*

Biological Controls: Several biocontrol agents are available for this weed and include gall mites that attack flower buds creating a cauliflower like growth; gall midge that feed on stem and leaf tissues; and rust fungus that causes decrease vigor of plants. These bio-controls only suppress the plant. Additional measures must be taken for control.

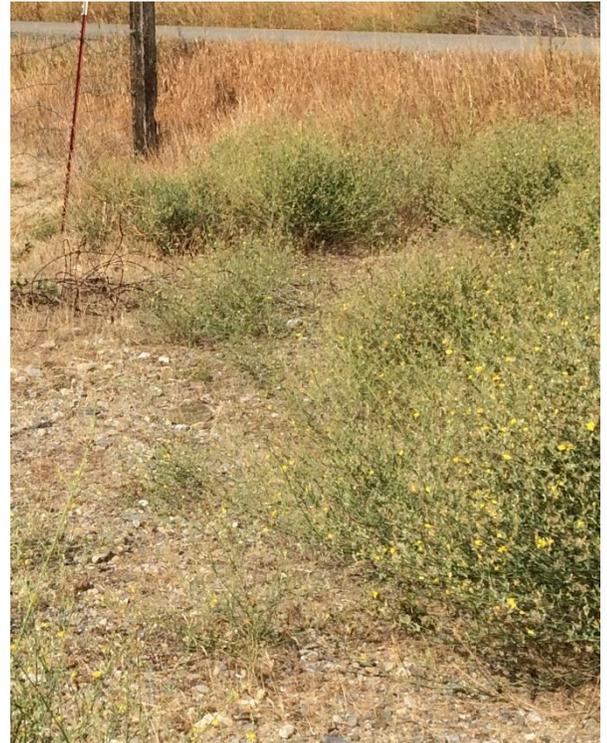
Mechanical Control: Mowing encourages satellite plants. However, mowing just before flowering temporarily reduces seed production. Pulling is effective on very young and small infestations if repeated



numerous times throughout a growing season. After seedlings are a month old, lateral roots develop and pulling causes root fragments allowing plants to sprout and spread.

Tilling generates root fragments that spread the plants, increasing infestation size. New plants can sprout from fragments as small as 1 inch. Tilling every 6 to 8 weeks can eliminate the weeds over time by depriving plants of the ability to regenerate carbohydrate reserves in roots.

Cultural Control: Rush Skeletonweed is palatable and nutritious in early rosette stages, becoming unpalatable as it ages. Grazing though encourages the spread of the plant through lateral roots sprouting daughter plants and should be avoided as seeds set. Mature seeds can pass through digestive tracts and infest additional areas. Proper grazing rotation is needed to allow desirable vegetation to recover.



Chemical Control: Control with selective herbicides can increase desirable vegetation. Timing is important. Spring and fall spraying are most effective with Rush Skeletonweed. Repeat application will be necessary to target remaining roots. Use a surfactant.

Recommended herbicides:

May, June	July	August, September, October
Seedling/Rosette	Bolt, Bud, Flowering	Seedlings & Regrowth
2,4-D	Tordon + 2,4-D	2,4-D
Milestone	Milestone	Milestone
MCPA		Transline
Prescott		
WeedMaster		

Read and follow label instructions when applying herbicides. Trade names have been used to simplify instructions and no endorsement or warranty is expressed or implied.



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For additional information on Noxious Weeds and the State Weed Law, visit our website at:

www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard