

Stop

The Invasion



Photographs courtesy of Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org

Rush Skeletonweed

Chondrilla juncea

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What is it?

Rush skeletonweed is a dandelion-like perennial weed that is native to Eurasia. It thrives in sunny areas with dry, sandy to gravelly soils. Its taproots can grow over eight feet deep, making it difficult to remove. It can propagate through its numerous seeds, lateral-growing roots that can sprout new plants, or broken fragments of roots.

Is it here yet?

Yes. Rush skeletonweed is wide-spread eastern Washington and many counties in western Washington.

Why should I care?

Rush skeletonweed contaminates crops and fouls harvesting machinery. By competing with other plants for resources, it reduces yields of both crops and forage for livestock and wildlife. It is an aggressive competitor that spreads quickly and is very difficult to remove.

What should I do if I find one?

Report a sighting online at www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/report.shtml.

How can we stop it?

Preventing an infestation from taking hold is easier than removing an established one. Do not till soil with rush skeletonweed growing in it; broken root fragments will grow new plants and spread the infestation. Hand-pulling multiple times a year for several years can be an effective method of control and removal for small infestations. Herbicide is much less effective after the plant starts flowering, though an infestation is more difficult to find when the plant is in its rosette phase before producing the taller flowering stems. Herbicide is most effective in the fall, when the weather has started cooling. Bio-control methods like gall mites and rust fungus have been released in North America and can be effective at suppressing population growth, though they will not eliminate an infestation.



Photograph courtesy of Eric Coombs, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org

What are its characteristics?

- Leafless branching stems emerging from dandelion-like rosettes of leaves. The leaves are lobed, fuzzy-textured, and have spines on the edge.
- Grows 1-5 feet tall
- 1/2 inch wide yellow flowers that turn into seeds with fluffy white hairs that disperse by wind
- The lower 4-6 inches of the stem has brown hairs pointing downwards
- Sap is milky white

Where do I get more information?

- [Washington Noxious Weed Control Board](#)
- [King County](#)
- [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)

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