

ORANGE HAWKWEED

(*Hieracium aurantiacum* L.)



ORANGE HAWKWEED

State Noxious Weed List: **No.**

Orange hawkweed is native to northern and central regions of Europe. The plant first was introduced in North America in Vermont in 1875 as an ornamental. Orange hawkweed escaped from landscape plantings, gardens and cemeteries and now occurs throughout the eastern seaboard, into the Midwest, extending west to Minnesota and Iowa and south to Virginia and North Carolina, and has been steadily spreading to the West. Orange hawkweed is described as the worst weed problem in the northern Minnesota Iron Range and has become a major weed problem in the Pacific Northwest.

Identification and growth form:

Orange hawkweed is a herbaceous perennial that contains a milky sap and commonly grows up to 12 inches tall. In the vegetative stage, the plant appears as a basal rosette with many hairy leaves. Leaves are 4 to 6 inches long, dark green above, light green beneath, narrow and spatula-shaped. Each rosette is capable of producing 10 to 30 flower stems. Stems of the plant have short, stiff hairs and may have one to three small, clasping leaves located below the midpoint of the stem.

Orange hawkweed produces between five and 30 red-orange flower heads that are 0.5 to 0.75 inch diameter. Flower heads are arranged in a flat-topped cluster. Orange hawkweed seeds are tiny and black, and have a tawny tuft of bristles on the flattened end. The plant spreads primarily vegetatively through runners (like strawberries) and rhizomes and to new sites by seed.

Why is this plant a concern?

Orange hawkweed is an aggressive species that quickly can develop into large, dense patches, thus reducing native plant communities. The plant colonizes rapidly, forming a solid mat of rosettes. Orange hawkweed may have allelopathic effects on neighboring plants.

How do I control this plant?

Chemical. Orange hawkweed can be controlled with Tordon (picloram), products that contain clopyralid (Curtail, Stinger, Transline), Milestone (aminopyralid) or dicamba plus 2,4-D. Monitor infested areas for several years to control new seedlings.

Mechanical. Pulling or digging is not recommended unless the infestation only consists of a few plants because digging stimulates the growth of new plants from rhizomes, stolons and fragmented roots.

Biological. Biological control of orange hawkweed is in the research stage and the gall wasp *Aulacidea subterminalis* has been released in the U.S. for evaluation.