

Meadow Hawkweed Complex

Hieracium pretense, *H. floribundum*, *H. piloselloides*

Currently in Montana, noxious weed infest about 8.2 million acres. Many of these state listed noxious weeds were brought to America as ornamentals for gardens, medicinal purposes, by accident in discarded soil from a ship's ballast, or unintentionally in bags of seed brought from other parts of the world. Whatever the cause of introduction, 32 non-native plant species have found their way onto Montana's state listed noxious weed list.

Meadow Hawkweed Complex (*Hieracium pretense*, *H. floribundum*, *H. piloselloides*), each species included in the meadow hawkweed complex are in the Asteraceae or sunflower family and are closely related to dandelions. They are native to Europe and can be found in the foothills of the Alps. The species is thought to have been introduced into the United States in 1828 as a medicinal remedy to cure digestive ailments. Meadow hawkweed typically inhabits mountain meadows, forest clearings, pastures, hayfields, roadsides, abandoned farmland, and other disturbed sites. This plant has shallow, fibrous roots, stolons and rhizomes. The basal leaves are dark green on the upper side and a lighter green below, spatula shaped and about 6" in length. Both the stems and the leaves are covered with hair. The rosettes of this plant produce 10-25 stems that can grow up to 3' in height. The stems usually do not have any leaves, and if they do, one single small leaf occurs at the mid-point of the stem. If severed, both the leaves and the stem secrete a white, milky juice. One stem can produce 5-30 flower heads; flowers are bright yellow to white in color and are ½" in diameter. Ray shaped flower petals are squared at the tip, and slightly resemble dandelion petals. Flowers bloom from June to August. Flowers on the stem tops grow in a flat-topped cluster, and after pollination tiny black seeds with a bristly tuft of hairs on the flattened end are produced. The bristly plume acts as a mode of transportation and aids in dispersal for seed spread. One characteristic that makes this plant so hard to control is that it can spread and reproduce by stolons and rhizomes, creating thick dense mats of vegetation.

Please take a few moments to learn about noxious weeds, if noxious weeds are not currently a problem in your area, they may be in the near future. For more information about Montana's state listed noxious weeds, regulated plants, or weed species listed on your county weed list, please contact your local county weed district (can list weed district name here... ex: **Lewis & Clark County Weed District**) at (406) (Phone number). Or you can contact the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-5600.