

Orange hawkweed
(*Hieracium aurantiacum*)

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 non-native plant species have found their way onto Montana's state listed noxious weed list.

Orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) is native to alpine regions of Europe and was introduced into the United States as an ornamental due to its showy bright red to orange flowers. Orange hawkweed inhabits disturbed areas such as roadsides, gravel pits, and overgrazed pastures. Orange hawkweed can also invade meadows and forested areas as well as habitats in higher elevations. Orange hawkweed is a protected plant in the Alps of Europe. Orange hawkweed is a member of the sunflower family and produces shallow, fibrous roots. The stem of this species is usually leafless or can have one or two small leaves; stems grow to a height of 12" and are covered with stiff black hairs called trichomes. There can be 2 to 25 flower heads present on each stem. Flowers are bright red to orange; each flower is ½" to 1" in diameter and petals are notched at the tips. Leaves form a basal rosette, are oblong or lance shaped, and measure about 4 ½" in length. Every part of this plant exudes a milky white substance when clipped. Orange hawkweed patches expand by stolons, like strawberry plants. Seeds are mainly produced at the patch perimeters, and are tiny, ridged, dark brown or black in color, and have bristly plumes. These bristly plumes, called a pappus, assist in transportation of seeds. The plume allows the seed a mode of transportation to be wind-dispersed and relocated to new areas. Orange hawkweed is difficult to control because it can reproduce through various methods.

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.