

Rush Skeletonweed

Chondrilla juncea

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.

Rush Skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*) gets its name from the lack of leaves on the upper part of the plant, giving the plant a "skeletal" appearance. This plant is native to Europe, Asia and North Africa, and is thought to have been brought to North America as a contaminant in animal bedding or contaminated seed around 1872. The rosette leaves of this plant look very similar to dandelion leaves. If cut or scraped, the leaves and stem of this plant ooze a white, milky latex substance that has been researched for making rubber. Course downward pointing brown hairs cover the bottom section of the stem of this plant. Rush skeletonweed flowers from June through September, producing yellow flower heads that are $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter. Flower heads can occur singly or in groups of up to five per stem. Each plant has the capability to produce 500 to 1,500 seeds per growing season. Seeds are light brown to black in color, ribbed and have white bristly hairs, called a pappus, at the top that aids in transportation for spreading the seed. This plant is a fierce competitor after a disturbance like a fire, this plant has the capability to re-sprout, giving it an edge over native plants that take longer to regenerate. Rush skeletonweed can tolerate extended periods of drought, occupies disturbed habitats, and reproduces by seed and lateral roots. If cut, a root section less than 1" in length can produce a new plant.

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.