

# Blueweed



flowers

stem

nutlets

# Blueweed

**Genus:** *Echium*

**Species:** *vulgare*

**Priority Listing:** 2A

**Biennial**

Blueweed is native to southern Europe, and was first introduced into the United States in the early 1800's. Blueweed is a biennial that has a black **taproot** along with **fibrous lateral roots**.

Blueweed has basal leaves that are narrow and 2" to 10" long. Leaves alternate on the stalk and become smaller near the **apex**. All of the leaves are covered with stiff hairs.

Blueweed can have multiple stems and look bushy in appearance, stems are 12" to 32" tall. Stalks are covered with short hairs and scattered long stiff hairs. The long stiff hairs often have swollen dark bases that form flecks on the stalk.

Flower buds of blueweed are reddish purple, and become bright blue upon flowering. Flowers are 1/3 to 2/3" long and are arranged on the upper side of short stems that grow longer after flowering. The petals of the blueweed flower are fused at the base into a short tube that flares. There are five distinctively

red **stamens**, four are long and one is short.

Blueweed only reproduces through seed. Seeds are called '**nutlets**.' Nutlets are clustered into groups of four. Nutlets are greyish brown, angular, have a very rough texture and are wrinkled in appearance. Nutlets can be spread by wind or water. They are also spread when they get stuck in animal fur or on the clothing and shoes or vehicles of humans, who unknowingly move them to new places.

Blueweed can be controlled by various **integrated weed management techniques** such as hand pulling and **herbicides**. Blueweed plants contain **toxins** that are poisonous to sheep and horses if they eat it.



Photo courtesy of Gerald D. Carr, University of Oregon

**Apex:** the very tip of a growing part

**Biennial:** a plant that lives two years, usually flowering in the second year

**Basal Leaves:** leaves situated at the base of a plant, may look different than the plant's other leaves

**Fibrous:** containing strong fibers

**Herbicide:** a chemical substance used to kill or

destroy plants, likely to be used on weeds

**Integrated Weed Management Techniques:** the combination of multiple management tools to reduce a pest population to an acceptable level while preserving the quality of existing habitat, water, and other natural resources

**Lateral roots:** roots forming on the side of a taproot

**Nutlet:** a small nut, which is a section of the dried ovary

**Stamen:** male organ of a flower, usually consisting of a stalk (filament) and a pollen-bearing portion (anther)

**Taproot:** a main single root of a plant, generally growing straight down

**Toxin:** a poisonous substance made within living cells of an organism, or created by humans through science