



# RUSH SKELETONWEED

*Chondrilla juncea*



- Other names: Gum succor, devil's-grass, naked weed, and hogbite
- Rush Skeletonweed is a Class B Designate noxious weed.
- Rush Skeletonweed is an herbaceous biennial to perennial from the Asteraceae Family, that reproduces by seeds and vegetative growth.
- Plants begin as basal rosettes with sharply toothed leaves. Stems develop and grow from 1 to 4 feet tall in late spring and flower until killed by frost in late fall. Its slender, vertical root system can extend 8 feet deep or more. A distinguishing

characteristic of Rush Skeletonweed is the presence of coarse, downward pointing hairs near the base of the stem. Stems have very few leaves and are narrow and linear in shape. Rosette leaves die off during flowering, leaving a skeleton-like appearance to the plant. Flowers are bright yellow, about ¾ inch in diameter and grow in leaf axils, or on branch tips. They may be single, or in clusters of 2 to 5. The ridged petals of the ray flowers have small teeth across their blunt ends. Seeds are pale brown to black.



- A mature plant can produce 1,500 flower heads, with up to 20,000



seeds, 90% of which will germinate. Seeds have numerous soft white bristles capable of carrying them on the wind up to 20 miles away.

- It is found in pastures, rangeland, crop-fields, roadsides and open areas. This species is a threat to irrigated lands, wheat areas, rangelands. Infestations impact the cattle industry because it displaces native or beneficial forage species grazed by livestock and wildlife.
- The plants extensive root system makes it highly competitive to crop plants for moisture and nutrients, especially nitrogen. Consequently, it reduces crop yields, often by as much as 70 percent.





## CONTROL OPTIONS

- The most effective control of Rush Skeletonweed is prevention. Above all, prevent plants from going to seed. Clip and carefully bag flower heads or buds to help prevent seeds from being produced.
- Hand pulling or digging is not an effective means of control for this species because of its extensive root system and its ability to produce new shoots from root fragments.
- Three biological control organisms, Rust Fungus, Gall Midge, and Gall Mite, have been released across Washington State where there are large populations of this

plant, though not currently in Pierce County.

- Selective, translocated herbicides such as *Picloram* (used in Grazon) and *2, 4 D* (used in Crossbow) are two herbicides that can be effective on Skeletonweed.
- Spot spraying with an herbicide containing the active ingredient *glyphosate* (used in Roundup Pro, or Glyphos) can also be effective. *Glyphosate* is non-selective however, and will injure any plants that it comes in contact with. Spot applications should be applied at bud stage, prior to blooming.
- When using herbicides, carefully read and follow all label instructions and obey all label precautions. (Note: pesticide product registration is renewed annually and product names and formulations may vary from year to year.)

