

# June 2016 Weed of the Month

## Black Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger* L.)

By: Kyran McGillion

### Fact:

Medicinal uses of Black Henbane date back to the 10th century. It has been used as a sedative and narcotic in cases of maniacal excitement, sleeplessness, nervous depressions, and various other ailments.



### Provincial Designation:

NOXIOUS- must be controlled in Alberta

### Reproduction:

Black Henbane reproduces through seeds. Each fruit capsule contains hundreds of tiny seeds. Seeds are highly germinable and will remain viable in the soil for several years.

### Impacts:

Every part of the plant is potentially toxic to humans and care should be taken when handling. Black Henbane is known to be toxic to livestock. Due to differences in digestion horses are more susceptible to the toxicity when compared to cattle, however exposure should be avoided for all animals.

### Identification:

**Flower:** Flowers are brownish-yellow with dark purple veins. On long racemes (unbranched group of flowers where the new flowers grow at the tip) in the axils (where the leaf stalk meets the stem) of the upper leaves.

**Seeds/Fruit:** Fruits are approximately 1 in long, five-lobed, and clustered on 2 rows that emerge in the fall. Each fruit capsule contains hundreds of tiny seeds. Seeds are kidney-shaped to oval, brownish-gray to black, and pitted.

**Leaves:** Leaves are alternate, coarsely toothed to shallowly lobed and pubescent (hairy) with a characteristically foul odor.

**Stems:** Mature plants are coarse, hairy, and 1-3 feet tall.



**Seedling:** The large rosettes have serrated leaves that are covered with fine hair.

**Other:** Foliage has a pungent, foul odor at all growth stages.



**Treatment:**

Black henbane is usually found on disturbed and overgrazed soils. Therefore, guarding against disturbance and overuse can be a good preventative measure against black henbane. Mechanical control and chemical are the most commonly recommended method. Control plants in the spring or early summer (before seed production). A follow-up visit a month after the first treatment is recommended to pick up missed or late bolting plants.

Your Ag Feldman should be contacted if you come across this weed.

**SPOTTED THIS WEED? Give your local Ag Fieldman a call!**

Special Areas 2: Jesse Williams (403) 854-1114 (or send a text!)

Special Areas 3: Don Hogan (403) 664-3006

Special Areas 4: Justine Simpson (403) 577-3523

