

## War on Weeds — Weeds Are Everybody's Problem

### THE ISSUE: Small bugloss

Small bugloss (*Anchusa arvensis*) is an annual that germinates in mid spring, grows up to 24 inches tall and 36 inches wide, flowers between June and August, and dies back with the first hard frost. Small bugloss can be a serious problem in cultivated fields where it out competes crops for space and nutrients causing decreases in crop yields. Because it is toxic to most livestock, it will also reduce viable forage in forage crops and in pastures. Its extensive taproot makes small bugloss difficult to kill by most means.



Photo courtesy of Scott Watson, Whitman County Noxious Weed Control Board, Bugwood.org

Distinguishing characteristics of small bugloss include small, light blue flowers. Flowers are 5-lobed with a large white center. Seeds are produced in four nuts produced from each flower. Each nut contains several hundred seeds which can remain viable for years in the soil until environmental conditions allow germination and growth. Leaves have an alternate arrangement and are lance shaped. They are 1-2 inches long with toothed margins, and they are covered in spiny hair.

### Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Options:

- Prevention – Learn to identify this plant and eradicate infestations on your property. Never transport unknown plant material. Fully test plants before purchasing seeds and only purchase seeds from licensed nurseries. Preventing seed production is fundamental to its eradication. Control efforts should be undertaken before flowering.
- Mechanical – Regular cultivation is most effective on small infestations. Make sure to remove the entire taproot system. Cultivation is most effective when completed before flowering.
- Biological – Small Bugloss is considered toxic to most grazing animals, and there are currently no approved bio-control insects for it in the US.
- Chemical – If applied early in the spring while the plant is in the rosette phase, chemical control may be effective. **Always read and follow herbicide label directions!**

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