

# WEED ALERT

## Common Bugloss



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA  
Ministry of  
Agriculture and Food

### Common Bugloss (*Anchusa officinalis*)

a.k.a. Common Alkanet

#### Family:

Boraginaceae

#### Description:

Deep taprooted perennial reproducing primarily by seed. Forms a rosette of basal leaves in its first year; a blue-purple flowered stalk in its second year. Multiple stalks form in subsequent years.

#### Stems:

- Robust hairy, angular stems grow 1 - 2 feet at maturity. Plants produce several flowering stalks.

#### Leaves:

- Lower leaves are lance-shaped with a stalk attaching it to stems while upper leaves are stalkless with either smooth or slightly toothed edges.
- The slightly pointed leaves are succulent and fleshy and covered with stiff hairs.

#### Flowers:

- Initially reddish, later turning deep blue to purple with white centres.
- Flowers originate at the ends of the stalks with each flower stem coiled like a fiddleneck at first. As each flower bud opens the coil gradually straightens out.

#### Root:

- Long taproot. New shoots develop from root stock fragments.

#### Seeds:

- Each flower produces 4 small, nutlet-like seeds.
- One plant produces an average of 900 seeds.



Common Bugloss

## *Distribution:*

Common bugloss, also known as anchusa or alkanet, is a common weed in Russia and is distributed throughout Europe. In the Pacific Northwest it is found in northern Spokane county in Washington State. In BC, the largest infestations known are north-east of Rock Creek and east of Kelowna in the Rutland - Black Mountain areas. Sitings have also been reported on Big White Mountain Road east of the Kettle River, west of Keremeos and in the Osoyoos area.

## *Concern:*

Common bugloss invades pastures and rangelands and is commonly found on idle areas where competing vegetation is sparse. This weed is also a concern to alfalfa production because the succulent leaves and stalks mould the hay once it is baled. In Washington State, bugloss spread to cover approximately 200 square miles in a seven year period.

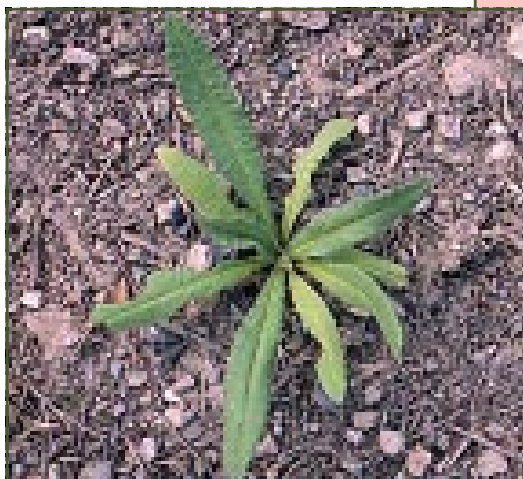
## *Ecology:*

Common bugloss prefers dry, nutritious, but lime free, sandy and gravelly soils. In Washington and BC it inhabits dry fields, open pastures, roadsides and idle areas. It likes warmth and is a good indicator of sandy and gravelly glacial out-wash soils.

## *What Can You Do?*

- **PREVENTING SEED PRODUCTION** should receive **TOP PRIORITY** to avoid further spread of common bugloss to uninfested areas. **Cut or pull** isolated plants before flowering. If flowering has occurred, **bag and remove** the plants for burning.
- **BE AWARE.** Learn more about common bugloss and how to identify it.
- **DO NOT HESITATE.** Control small infestations immediately.
- **CLEAN** equipment, tools, vehicles and footwear **BEFORE** leaving infested areas.

REPORT sitings to your local office of the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food or the BC Ministry of Forests District office.



Bugloss Seedling



"Fiddleneck" flower stem uncoils as each bud opens