

Control Methods

Mechanical- Cultivation (disking or plowing) should not be used to control rush skeletonweed as it will most likely spread the weed and enlarge the infestation. Only after it is completely controlled, should cultivation be used to help with revegetation of desirable species. If conditions are right (light soil, good moisture, few plants), pulling skeletonweed plants is somewhat effective. When pulling plants, pay special attention to get as much of the root system as possible. Frequent mowing may exhaust root storage and seed production, resulting in suppression.

Biological-The skeletonweed gall midge and the skeletonweed gall mite were released in the United States and are now widely spread and appear to be reducing the rush skeletonweed density in California. There has also been research into a rust fungus that has only been partially successful.

Chemical- There are several herbicides available that are recommended for rush skeletonweed. Research has shown that Aminopyralid, 2,4-D, and Clopyralid are all effective in controlling this persistent weed. Applications are best made in the spring when the plants are in the rosette stage. In cold weather climates, applications can also be made in the fall. As always, read and follow herbicide label directions carefully. Contact your local County Agriculture Department to determine the best herbicide for your situation.

History

Rush skeletonweed is native to Eurasia and the Mediterranean areas and has been introduced into the United States, Chile, Australia, and New Zealand. It was first collected in the U.S. in Washington D.C. in 1872 and appeared on the west coast near Spokane, Washington in 1938. Rush skeletonweed now occurs in more than 2.5 million acres in California and the Pacific Northwest. and is considered a noxious weed in 7 states.



Distribution

Rush skeletonweed presently infests several million acres in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and California. Locally, skeletonweed can be found in Sierra County bordering Highway 49 from Downieville to Nevada City. More recently, plants have now been found in the Sierra Valley.



For More Information:

- Plumas-Sierra Counties
Department of Agriculture (530) 283-6365
Website: countyofplumas.com
- California Invasive Plant Council
Website: www.cal-ipc.org

Photos, and text provided by:

- ◆ Weeds of the West 11th Edition 2012
- ◆ Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
- ◆ Pacific Northwest Weed management Handbook
- ◆ Photos By; Leo Michels; Gertraud Norton; Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

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Rush Skeletonweed

AKA: *Chondrilla juncea*



Plumas-Sierra
Counties
Dept. of Agriculture

We Control and Eradicate
Invasive Weeds

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Why should I care about noxious weeds?

When noxious weeds spread, they impact the environment. They reduce the biodiversity of native plant communities and rapidly displace other plants that provide habitat for wildlife and food for people and livestock.

Weeds also have an economic impact by reducing the land's productivity and by decreasing the quality and value of crop and livestock production. Some weeds are poisonous to livestock. Some noxious weeds are so competitive that they crowd out all the desirable plants.

Weeds can increase maintenance costs and reduce the usefulness and value of recreation areas. Who wants to hike in noxious weeds?



What can I do?

- Drive only on established roads and trails away from weed-infested areas.
- When using pack animals, carry only feed that is certified weed free (or use pelletized feed).
- Beginning 96 hours before entering back country areas, feed pack animals only food that is certified weed free (or use pelletized feed).
- Remove weed seeds from pack animals by brushing them thoroughly and cleaning their hooves before transporting.
- If you find a few plants and decide to pull them, place the plants in a plastic bag or a similar container and dispose of them properly. Root parts can regenerate into new plants very readily from very small pieces.
- If you find a weed-infested area, let the landowner or manager know so that they can take steps to control the weeds (or notify your local County Agriculture Department).
- Noxious weed seeds or plant parts may attach themselves to tires, shoelaces, camping equipment, construction equipment, garden tools, or any other surface that contacts an infested area. These seeds or plant parts can then travel hundreds of miles before falling to an uninfested area. To avoid starting a new infestation, please clean all surfaces before leaving any area.



What does Rush Skeletonweed look like and where does it grow?

HABITAT: Rush skeletonweed grows best in well-drained sandy or gravelly soil in climates with cool winters and hot, dry summers. It is most commonly found in disturbed soil along roadsides, in croplands and rangelands, and in residential areas.

GROWTH: Rush skeletonweed has a deep and persistent taproot that has branches extending up to 10 inches along its length, little pieces of which can start a new plant. The stems have a waxy coating, making it harder for herbicides to stick, and have little to no leaf growth. Small plants will have a rigid stem with downward facing hairs, and a reddish tint to the leaves of the rosette.



FLOWERS: The yellow flowerheads are less than one inch wide and are scattered on the branches. The petals are strap-shaped and flat across the end with distinct lobes or teeth.

HEIGHT: Rush skeletonweed is a perennial that will grow from 1 to 4 feet tall with a taproot that extends 4 to 6 feet below the surface.

SEEDS: The seeds can be pale brown to nearly black and are about 1/8 inch long. Seed bodies are smooth on the bottom and ribbed on top with white slender hairs acting as a parachute for seed distribution.