

HOUND'S TONGUE

Tier 1

Overview



Hound's Tongue is a weak competitor and requires disturbance to become established. Cattle loafing areas and wallows are a common starting point for infestations, healthy rangelands will be resistant to an invasion. Once an area has been infected, Hound's Tongue will quickly colonize the area and form dense monocultures. This hinders the growth of desirable rangeland species and thus decreases the available forage for livestock.

The plant contains poisonous alkaloids. Animals don't forage on the fresh plants but if it's mixed with hay, it can cause severe liver failure. Fatal liver disease has occurred in horses that have fed on hay with as little as 6% Hound's Tongue over a course of 2 weeks.

Habitat

This plant can survive hot summers and cold winters, it's shade tolerant and can grow in a variety of soils; from alkaline to clay and it thrives in wet grasslands.

Hound's Tongue can be seen growing in rangelands, pastures, abandoned crop lands, roadsides, and disturbed forested areas.

Identification

Hound's Tongue can either be a biennial or short-lived perennial. A basal rosette is formed in the first year and flowers in the 2nd.

Stem: There can be multiple stems that can grow 1.5 m tall.

Leaves: Alternate and oblong and hairy resembling a Hound's Tongue.

Flower: Reddish-purple in colour, have five petals and appear from May to July.

Seeds: Seeds are called nutlets and are covered in barbs that allow them to easily stick to fur, hair and clothes, which allows for dispersal to new areas for invasion. The nutlets reduce the sale value of livestock, stress the animals and causes irritation and behavioural problems in cattle.



One plant can produce more than 500 seeds and the seeds remain viable for 2-3 years on the soil surface, but if buried they will rarely survive more than a year.