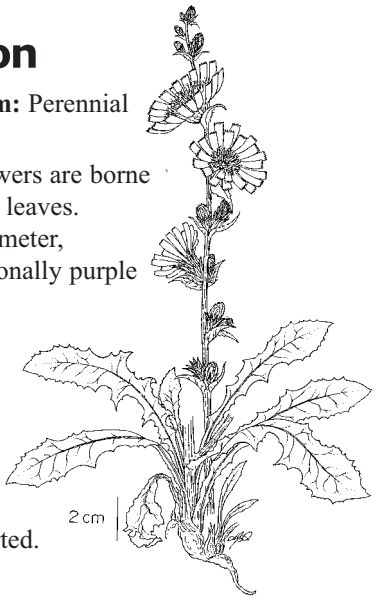
CHICORY

Cichorium intybus L.

Family: *Asteraceae* (Sunflower).
Other Scientific Names: None.
Other Common Names: Coffeeweed, blue sailors, succory.
Legal Status: Not categorized.

Identification



Growth form: Perennial forb.

Flower: Flowers are borne in the axils of the upper leaves. Flowers are 4 cm in diameter, usually blue, but occasionally purple or white.

Seeds/Fruit: Fruits are ribbed and tipped by a crown of minute scales.

Leaves: Basal leaves are rough, 8–25 cm long, lance-shaped, toothed or pinnately parted. Upper leaves are smaller, alternate, stalkless, clasping the stem, with undivided margins.

Stems: Mature plants range in size from 0.3 to 2.0 m tall. Stems are erect and branched above. The entire plant exudes a milky juice when broken.

Roots: Plants grow from a deep taproot.

Seedling: No information available.

Similar Species

Exotics: None known.

Natives: Chicory can be distinguished from blue lettuce (*Lactuca tatarica*) by its more branched growth pattern and stalkless flowers.

Impacts

Agricultural: Although this plant is grown as a hay crop in Europe, dairy products from cows that eat it may taste bitter (Stubbendieck et al. 1995).

Ecological: In BC chicory invades disturbed areas and native plant communities, but its impacts have not been documented.

Human: Milky latex may cause dermatitis.

Habitat and Ecology

General requirements: Chicory is found from low- to mid-elevations at the coast and on Interior grasslands and forests. It frequents roadsides, fields, and disturbed habitats. It can adapt to a wide range of soils and environmental conditions but often occurs on high-lime soils.

Distribution: Chicory occurs frequently in southern areas of the province and is common throughout North America. It is present in the Kootenay, Okanagan, Thompson, Mainland, Vancouver Island, Cariboo, and Omineca agricultural reporting regions.

Historical: Introduced from Eurasia. Often planted for use as salad greens, and the root is used as a substitute for coffee (Whitson et al. 1996).

Life cycle: Flowering occurs from July to September, depending on location.

Mode of reproduction: By seeds.

Seed production: No information available.

Seed bank: No information available.

Dispersal: No information available.

Hybridization: No information available.

Management

Biocontrol: None.

Mechanical: Chicory can be managed by mowing and cutting before plants set seed. Repeated treatments may be required over several years to exhaust nutrient reserves in the roots and to control new plants that emerge from the soil seed bank.

Fire: No information available.

Herbicides: A combination of picloram and 2,4-D can be effective when plants are actively growing (Dow AgroSciences 1998). Combinations of dicamba, 2,4-D, and picloram or dicamba, 2,4-D, and glyphosate have also been used to control chicory (Dow AgroSciences 1998). Consult the most recent edition of BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Crop Production Guides for specific recommendations. **Before applying herbicides, read the label for full use and precautionary instructions.**

Cultural/Preventive: Prevent the establishment of new infestations by minimizing disturbance and seed dispersal. Hand-pulling plants before seed-set can be effective on new and small infestations, especially before a seed bank has become established.

Integrated Management Summary

Maintaining healthy plant communities and re-vegetating disturbed areas prevent the spread of chicory. Combine preventive measures with mechanical and chemical control. Use herbicides with cultural methods where appropriate, especially on new infestations.

References

Dow AgroSciences. 1998. Chicory—biennials/perennials. Dow AgroSciences. The Ranch, Pasture Improvement. http://www.dowagro.com/theranch/weeds.asp [5 Mar 99].

Stubbendieck, J., G. Y. Friisoe, and M. R. Bolick. 1995. Scotch thistle. *Weeds of Nebraska and the Great Plains*. Lincoln: Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry.

Whitson, T. D. (ed.), L. C. Burrill, S. A. Dewey, D. W. Cudney, B. E. Nelson, R. D. Lee, R. Parker. 1996. Chicory. *Weeds of the West*. Western Society of Weed Science, in cooperation with the Western United States Land Grant Universities Cooperative Extension Services, Newark, CA.