



INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

Red Bartsia (*Odontites serotina*) aka Late Flowering Eyebright, Red Rattle

SK Provincial Designation: Prohibited

Overview:

Red Bartsia was introduced to Canada from its native Europe in the 1950s. It arrived as a contaminant of packing material in crates delivered from Germany to the Canadian Armed Forces Base at Gimli, Manitoba. The plant began to grow along runways at the base, which were subsequently baled by local farmers for hay.

Since its introduction, Red Bartsia has spread throughout a large area of Manitoba and is continuing to spread. It is not known to have arrived in Saskatchewan yet, but could very easily be transported into the province along roadsides and in baled forage from Manitoba.

Each Red Bartsia plant can produce 1,400 seeds that easily float and are covered in coarse hairs that allow them to attach to bales, animal fur, clothing and equipment.



PHOTO: John Johnston, mbweeds.ca

Habitat:

Red Bartsia thrives in a variety of soil types and infestations are mainly found in pastures, hayfields and roadsides. It is able to quickly outcompete forage stands, as it is not palatable to livestock. It has also begun to move into native grasslands.

Identification:

Stems: Stems are erect and hairy, often branched, and 10 to 50 centimetres tall.

Leaves: Leaves are hairy and lance-shaped with 2 to 3 blunt teeth.

Flowers: Flowers are dark pinkish-red to purple in color and resemble tiny snapdragons, growing like a spike along the stem. Red Bartsia typically flowers between June and September and is pollinated by bees and wasps.

Seeds: Each plant is capable of producing 1,400 seeds. The seeds are covered in coarse hairs that allow them to attach to bales, animal fur, clothing and equipment.

Prevention:

Red Bartsia is easily transported by humans in contaminated hay and attached to equipment and ATVs. Inspect and clean all equipment before moving from an infested area to an uninfested area, and avoid baling and transporting Red Bartsia. Planting competitive crops is an effective prevention strategy.



PHOTO: Sannse, Wikipedia.org



PHOTO: Michelle Ammeter, Weed Supervisor, Macdonald Weed District, Manitoba

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Red Bartsia (*continued*)

Control:

Grazing: Red Bartsia is not palatable to livestock. Invasive plants should not be considered as forage.

Cultivation: Heavily infested pastures and hayfields could be cultivated and planted with annual crops for at least 9 years to effectively deplete the seed bank.

Mechanical: Mowing is not a recommended strategy for the control of Red Bartsia as it would spread seeds and make the problem worse. Hand-pulling is effective for small infestations as long as it is done diligently and thoroughly before the plant goes to seed; several removal efforts over the season may be required.

Chemical: The use of pesticides in any manner not published on the label or registered under the Minor Use of Pesticides regulation constitutes an offence under both the Federal Pest Control Products Act and provincial acts in Saskatchewan. For the latest information on pesticides for agricultural use in Saskatchewan, please consult the provincial Guide To Crop Protection produced annually by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture or consult your local Ministry of Agriculture representative.

Biological: Currently, there is no biological control for Red Bartsia available in Canada.



PHOTO: Kristian Peters, Commons.wikipedia.org



PHOTO: John Johnston, mbweeds.ca



PHOTO: F. Paulson, mbweeds.ca



PHOTO: Chet Neufeld

Sources:

Odontites vernus. Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. 2013. www.wikipedia.org

Red Bartsia Fact Sheet. Alberta Invasive Plants Council. www.invasiveplants.ab.ca

Red Bartsia: *Odontites serotina*. Invasive Species Council of Manitoba. www.invasivespeciesmanitoba.com

Red Bartsia. Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association. www.mbweeds.ca