

## Hound's tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*)

**POISONOUS**

### Description

A biennial, with a thick, deep taproot, that has two distinct growth phases, a first year rosette vegetative growth phase, followed by a second year reproductive flowering phase. Grows to 1.2 m tall. Leaves are oblong with numerous soft white hairs on both surfaces. They have prominent veins and are said to look like a dog's tongue. Flowers range in color from dull red to burgundy. Each flower develops seed clusters containing four (sometimes three) nutlets. Fruits are flat, teardrop-shaped, and have a hard spiny husk with barbs. Protruding barbs adhere to fur or fleece of wildlife and livestock, and human clothing. CAUTION: Poisoning occurs when animals consume sufficient quantities of hound's-tongue with high pyrrolizidine alkaloid concentrations.



### Key Identifiers

- ✓ Leaves are tongue-shaped, hence the name, and are attached closely to the stem with the uppermost leaves clasping the stem.
- ✓ The fused petals of the flower are reddish-purple.
- ✓ Seeds are contained in the prickly four-lobed nutlets that cling to fur and clothing.

### Location in Canada

Hound's-tongue is located in all Canadian provinces, excluding Newfoundland and PEI.

### Resources

<http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca/Downloads/FS-HoundsTongue.pdf>

### Similar species

*Verbascum thapsus* - In the rosette stage, can appear similar to common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), however hound's tongue leaves are darker green, droop, and have coarser hairs on them. Both are Noxious in the AB *Weed Control Act*.

*Hackelia spp.* & *Lappula spp.* -The flowers are light blue to white and the fruits have spines on the margins only.

*Cynoglossum boreale* -The native species *Cynoglossum boreale* is more commonly found in eastern North America(only 1 report in AB). It lacks leaves on the flowering stem and has white or blue flowers.