

Rush Skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*)

Description

A tap-rooted perennial reproducing primarily by seed but also by shoot buds produced on lateral roots.

Grows to 1.2 m tall. Lower 15 cm of stem covered with stiff, downward pointing, brown hairs, and remainder of stem hairless. Much branched wiry stems contain a white, milky juice.

Bottom leaves form a rosette and look similar to dandelion. These leaves are to 3 cm wide and to 13 cm long.

Stem leaves arising from the branch axils are small, narrow and linear (sometimes toothed). These leaves are generally inconspicuous from a distance, giving the appearance of a "skeleton-like" plant. Flowers are yellow, about 2 cm in diameter, composed of 7 to 15 individual florets. Many flowers per plant, an average of 1500 are produced per plant. Flower heads are produced individually or in groups of two to five along or at the ends of the stems.

Key Identifiers

- ✓ downward bent, reddish, brown coarse hairs on the lower 15 cm of the stem
- ✓ a skeletal look of the plant due to the lack of leaves on the upper part of the plant.
- ✓ Many branches, many flowers

Location in Canada

In Canada, Rush Skeletonweed has been reported in British Columbia and Ontario. Alberta has no known reports.

Resources

<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/rushskel.htm>

http://www.weedsbc.ca/pdf/rush_skeletonweed.pdf

http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_chju.pdf

Similar species

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) Dandelion share a lot of characteristics in common with rush skeletonweed (leaves without hairs, leaf lobes pointing backward and opposite one another, milky juice exuded when torn). However, dandelion has un-branched, leafless, hollow, non-persistent, fleshy flowering stems and seeds without small scales at the apex.

Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*) is similar to rush skeletonweed and dandelion, but has rosette leaf lobes pointing outwards or forwards and not always opposite and basal leaves with a few rough coarse hairs.



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