

Fact Sheet: Creeping Bellflower (*Campanula rapunculoides*)

SPOT IT: How to Identify

- **Flowers:** Distinct bell-shaped, blue-purple flowers with 5-pointed lobes. They grow nodding downward, primarily **along one side of a 2-to-3-foot-tall flower stalk**.
 - **Bloom Time:** Summer to early fall.
 - **Stems:** Green or purple, producing a **milky sap** when broken.
 - **Leaves:** Coarse-toothed edges and slightly hairy undersides.
 - *Base leaves:* Heart-shaped with long stalks.
 - *Upper leaves:* Alternating, shorter, and narrow (lance-shaped).
 - **Roots:** A complex, extensive system consisting of thick, tuber-like storage roots (resembling "little turnips"), horizontal creeping rhizomes, and fine fibrous roots.
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THE THREAT: Why It Must Go

- **Chokes Out Vegetation:** The aggressive root system forms dense underground mats that physically crowd out and steal moisture/nutrients from lawns, prized garden plants, and native species.
 - **Monopolizes Pollinators:** While it attracts some native bees, it displaces native plant species that provide far superior, diverse nutrition for a wider variety of essential pollinators.
 - **Insane Seed Production:** A single plant can produce up to **15,000 seeds** per year, which are rapidly spread by the wind.
 - **Fragments Regrow:** Even the tiniest piece of root or rhizome left behind in the dirt can regenerate into an entirely new plant, making it incredibly difficult to eliminate.
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How to Properly Eradicate

 **Critical Disposal Rule:** **Never** place pulled creeping bellflower into standard municipal yard waste bins or compost piles—doing so is illegal under state statute and spreads the weed. Bag the plants tightly and allow them to rot completely in the sun, or burn them if local ordinances allow.

Mechanical & Cultural Control

- **Meticulous Hand Pulling:** Best for small patches. Dig deep with a trowel or spade to extract **all** tubers, rhizomes, and root fragments. Check the area weekly, as repeated digging will be necessary to catch missed fragments.
- **Smothering:** For dense garden patches, smother the plants by covering them with a thick tarp or multiple layers of newspaper/cardboard topped with mulch to block all light.
- **Lawn Management:** Maintain a dense, healthy turf through proper fertilization and overseeding to prevent encroachment. Regular lawn mowing will stop the plant from flowering and seeding, but it *will not* kill the root system.

Chemical Control

Creeping bellflower is highly resistant to many common weedkillers. If choosing chemical control, **fall is the most effective time to apply**, with spring as a backup.

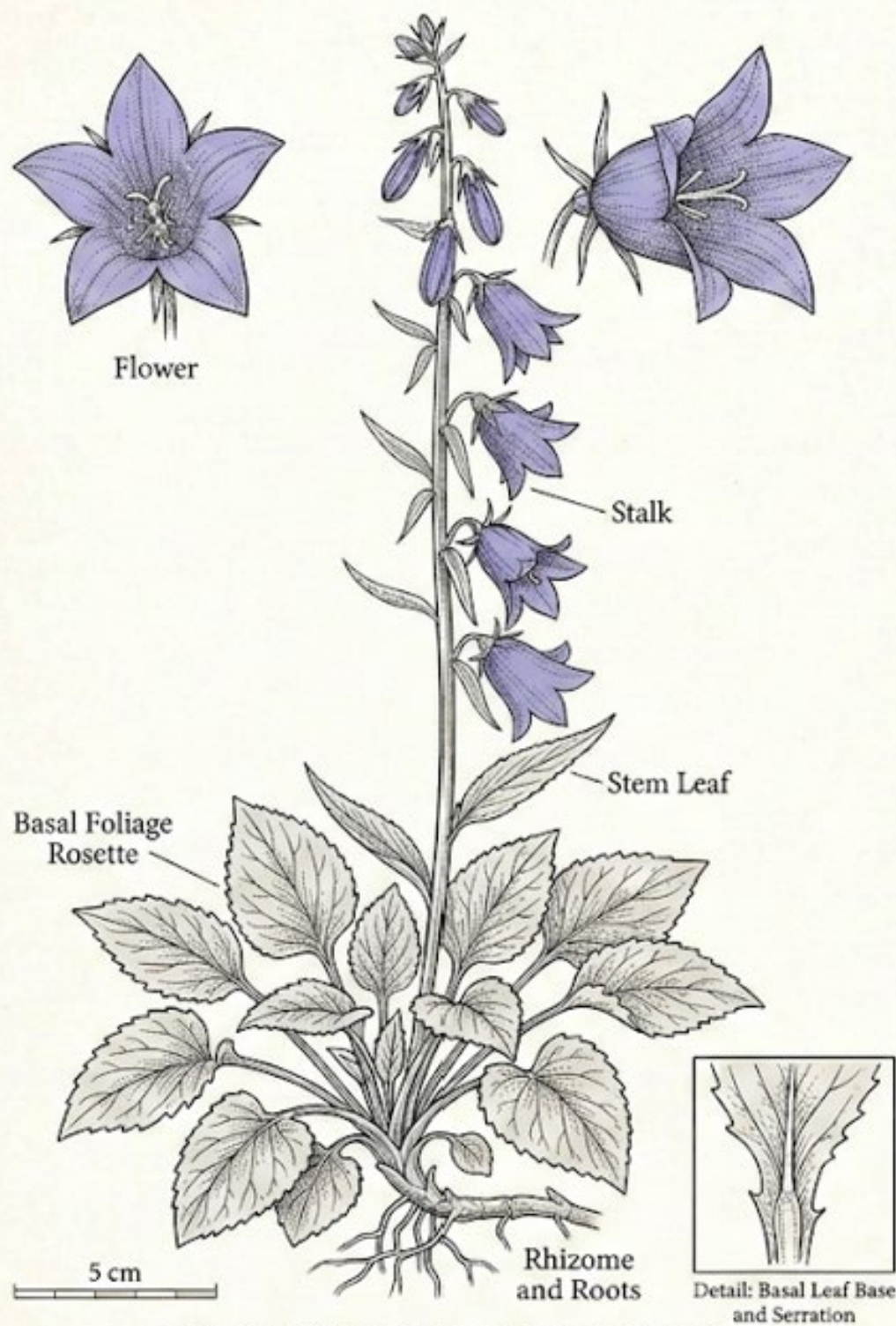
- **Selective Herbicides (Lawns):** Products containing **Dicamba** and **Triclopyr** provide some control but require higher doses and repeated applications. *Note: 2,4-D and Quinclorac are entirely ineffective.*
- **Non-Selective Herbicides (Spot Treatment):** **Glyphosate** is effective but requires sequential applications. Because it is non-selective, it will kill any surrounding grass or desirable plants it touches.

CAUTION: Always follow the pesticide label instructions exactly. The label is the law.

Sources & Further Reading

Trappe, J., Burley, N. (2025) [University of Minnesota Extension: Creeping Bellflower](#)

Panke, B., deRegnier, R., Renz, M. (2012, January 10). [Management of Invasive Plants in Wisconsin \(set\) — The Learning Store](#)



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