



Resources for Invasive Weed Identification

It is that time of year when plants are in full bloom, making it the ideal time to determine which invasive weeds are present in your rural municipality or First Nation community. Invasive species are often mistaken for native plants, as many can look alike. If you're having difficulty identifying a plant, there are several resources available to help.

1. First and foremost, your PHTAs are here to support you with weed identification. Feel free to send us a photo by email or text, and we will do our best to provide a quick identification. You can also submit plant samples to the **Crop Protection Lab** for identification. This is a free service available to appointed Weed Inspectors in Saskatchewan.
2. Online and paper resources are available to help you in your quest for weed identification. Some online resources include the websites listed below. Two books that are great for weed ID include *Weeds of North America* and *Weeds of the Prairies*.

- ❖ **Saskatchewan Invasive Plant Species Identification Guide**
- ❖ **Saskatchewan Invasive Species Council – Fact Sheets**
- ❖ **Saskatchewan Wildflowers Photo Guide**
- ❖ **Notice Nature Guidebooks and Resources**

3. Several mobile apps can assist with initial plant identification. Apps our team have used include iNaturalist, Google Lens and PictureThis. These apps can be useful as a starting point; however, it is important to verify any identification using reliable resources or expert support.

Invasive weed identification does not have to be a challenge when you have the right tools and support. By using a combination of expert assistance, reliable resources, and technology, you can confidently identify and manage invasive species in your area. When in doubt, reach out!

Upcoming Events & Reminders

Leafy Spurge Beetle Collection Days are set for **July 6–9, 2026**, from **10 AM to 3 PM daily** at the scenic **Besant Campground**, just west of Caronport on Highway #1.

This free hands-on event is a fantastic opportunity to help manage leafy spurge using biocontrol insects— leafy spurge flea beetles! The SARM Plant Health Technical Advisors will be on-site to guide you through the collection process and help package beetles for release on your land. Be sure to bring water, wear long pants (watch out for poison ivy and ticks!), and plan your beetle release site in advance for best results.

The Gopher Control Program (GCP) deadline is July 31, 2026. This is a popular program available to producers, RMs and First Nations so don't miss the opportunity for rebates!

Weeds to Watch For: Orange Hawkweed and Meadow Hawkweed



Photo: Orange Hawkweed
(Credit: J. Kwasnicki, PHTA
Div. 2)

Orange Hawkweed is a prohibited weed under *The Saskatchewan Weed Control Act* and is the only hawkweed species with distinctive orange flowers. Originally introduced as an ornamental, it spreads aggressively through stolons and wind-borne seed, allowing it to quickly establish dense patches.

Identification

- 30–60 cm tall with a hairy stem containing milky sap
- Bright orange-red flowers clustered at the top
- Leaves are bristly-hairy and oblong to spatulate in shape

Control

- Mowing prior to flowering can help reduce seed production
- Avoid soil disturbance, as it can promote further spread
- Herbicide options are available for control. See Appendix A for more information.

Meadow Hawkweed is also a prohibited weed under *The Saskatchewan Weed Control Act*. This perennial forb has yellow flowers and spreads through both seed and fibrous root systems. Its association with mycorrhizal fungi allows it to compete aggressively with surrounding vegetation, leading to rapid spread.

Identification

- 20–70 cm tall with hairy, erect, unbranching stems containing milky sap
- Yellow ray flowers in clusters
- Leaves are hairy, narrow to broadly ovate, ranging from bright green to yellow-green

Control

- Intensive and repeated cultivation can help in crop settings
- Mowing may reduce seed set but can stimulate vegetative growth, so control may be limited
- Hand-pulling is effective in small patches where roots can be fully removed



Photo: Meadow Hawkweed (Credit: Alberta Invasive Species Council)

Key Differences Between Orange Hawkweed and Meadow Hawkweed - The most noticeable difference is flower colour—orange hawkweed has bright orange-red blooms, while meadow hawkweed has yellow flowers. Orange hawkweed spreads primarily through stolons and seed, forming dense surface mats. In contrast, meadow hawkweed spreads through both seed and fibrous roots, allowing it to establish more persistent infestations. As a result, meadow hawkweed often requires more intensive control approaches.

Please contact your SARM Division Plant Health Technical Advisor for more information, to answer any questions, or to suggest content for future newsletters.

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