

THE ENEMY: Houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*)

STRATEGY: is a biennial plant that grows from 1 to 4 feet tall and reproducing by seed. Each plant will send up 4-6 vegetation shoots. The leaves are rough, long (resembles a hounds tongue), and somewhat hairy. The flowers of this enemy are reddish-purple and form 4 prickly nutlets, each about 1/3 inch long with barbs that allow it to cling onto clothing, fur, shoelaces, and anything that brushes against it. Houndstongue is toxic to animals as it causes liver damage. It is mainly spread by wildlife and livestock, but we can find it anywhere humans have visited.

Attack: One of the ways that animals eat it is by indirect ingestion through weedy bailed hay and alfalfa. The seed can catch a ride on animal's fur or feathers and carried for many, many miles. This plant is extremely mobile and once established out competes native habitat. It particularly gets dense in riparian (near water) areas as there is an abundance of moisture and it gets rubbed off animals in the shade by the branches. Because the seed is cased in the hard barbed shell the seed can last 7 to 10 years in the soil.

DEFENSE: As this is a biennial plant, mechanical control can be quite effective. If you decide to 'dig it' out with a shovel just make sure that you get at least three inches of the root. Research is in the final stages in finding a Biological control insect that will be effective in slowing the spread of this plant. Many herbicides are available that work well. Telar XP, Opensight, and Milestone work extremely well. Treatments can be in spring or fall.