

Nature Notes

Viper's Bugloss



Considered an invasive plant in BC, viper's bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) was brought to North America from Europe in the 1600s. Like many invasive plants, Viper's bugloss is often found in disturbed



sites with dry, poor soil. Also known as blueweed, this blue-flowered biennial is a delight to the eye. Careful though, the sharp, prickly hairs covering the stem can puncture skin and the plant contains alkaloids that can cause liver damage. During the first year of growth, a basal rosette forms with a deep taproot;

Flower of the Viper's Bugloss Photo: J. Duncan

in the second year the plant can reach a height of 90cm.

Folklore states that viper's bugloss is a remedy for snakebites and the seeds are similar to the shape of snakehead, resulting in the name 'viper's'. The leaves are reminiscent of the shape of an ox's tongue, resulting in the Greek name 'bugloss'.

Viper's bugloss can be found at many of the entrances to the Kimberley Nature Park, where disturbances to the soil and vegetation allow this plant to find a foothold.



Basal rosette

Photo: J. Duncan

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