

## Black Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*)

**Identification** Black henbane, less commonly known as fetid nightshade or insane root, is an annual to biennial plant growing up to 3 feet tall. Rosettes are large and generally have toothed to incised leaves that are covered with fine hairs and may resemble thistles, but they lack spines. From June-September, plants form tubular, cream to green flowers that are five-lobed, 2 inches wide, and have purple veins and throats. The flowering stalk with the pineapple or urn shaped fruits is distinctive. Stem leaves are alternate, dentate, have a prominent white mid-vein, and are up to 8 inches long by 6 inches wide. The plant has a foul odor due to dense glandular hairs on leaves and stems.

**Impacts** All parts of the plant, including seeds, contain alkaloids which are toxic to humans and animals if consumed. While two alkaloids (hysocyamine and scopolamine) in black henbane can be used as sedative, anti-spasmodic drugs, they are used under carefully controlled conditions, which livestock generally don't follow. Fortunately, livestock will avoid it unless other forage is not available. However, dried plants in baled forage remains toxic and will be readily consumed.

**Habitat** Black henbane is most common on open, disturbed or heavily grazed sites. It occurs in pastures, fence rows, roadsides, waste places, and riparian areas. It does well in most soil types, and growth is enhanced by soil nitrogen. It does not tolerate water logged soil.

**Spread** Plants spread by seed and not vegetatively. Seeds are black and tiny with no special appendages for dispersal.

**Management Priorities:** Black henbane is listed as noxious in California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico and Washington. It's on county lists in Beaverhead, Bighorn, Broadwater, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, and Sweet Grass Counties in Montana. Prevention and early detection are the top management priorities. Plants thrive with disturbance so avoid overgrazing and other disturbances. Early



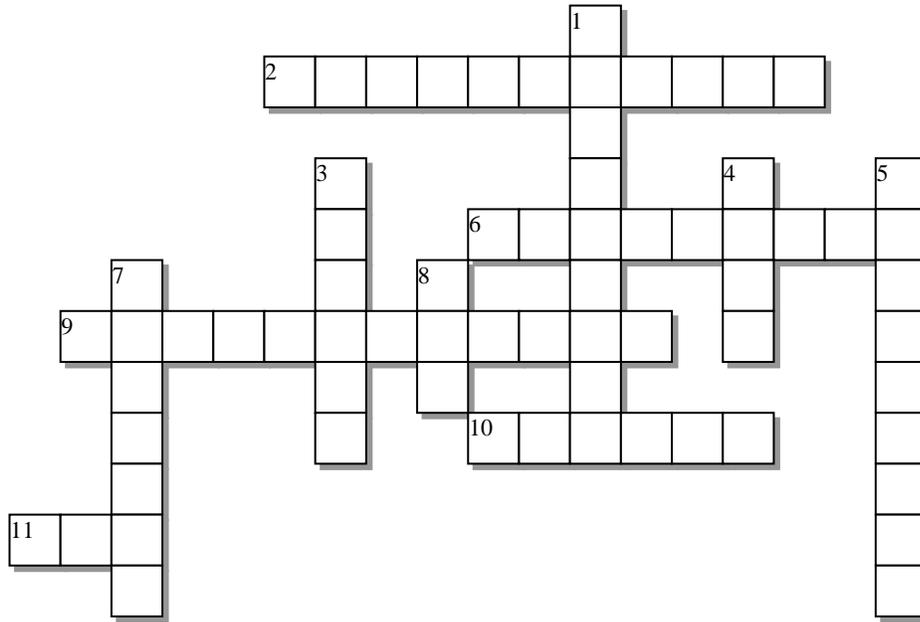
detection is relatively easy because the tall, distinctive flowering stalks make the plants readily detectable once they bolt. Hand pulling (with gloves) while populations are still small is strongly recommended. If the soil is dry, use a shovel to make sure the thick, fleshy, taproot is completely removed. Pulling should occur before seed set. Plants with mature fruits should be placed in bags to prevent seed dispersal. Return to the site a month after the first treatment to pick up missed or late bolting plants and return annually for four to five years, based on the seed longevity. If the patch is too large for hand pulling, herbicides may be needed. Reseeding following control may be necessary. For more information, see: "Black

Henbane: Identification, Biology and Integrated Management"

[http://www.msuextension.org/invasiveplantsMangold/documents/Publications\\_bulletins/black\\_henbane.pdf](http://www.msuextension.org/invasiveplantsMangold/documents/Publications_bulletins/black_henbane.pdf)



## Test your knowledge of black henbane



**Across:**

- 2 - This management strategy is recommended for small populations
- 6 - Black henbane was introduced to the US in 17th century as an ornamental and \_\_\_\_\_ plant\*
- 9 - Black henbane does not spread \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 - Flowers are creamy white with \_\_\_\_\_ veins and throat
- 11 - After flowers dry up, the sepals remain, forming an \_\_\_\_ shape, ready to pour the seeds out

**Down:**

- 1 - \_\_\_\_\_ hairs that cover the plant emit a terrible odor
- 3 - Alert: the foul odor that deters animals disappears in baled \_\_\_\_\_, but the toxicity remains
- 4 - Tubular flowers have this many lobes
- 5 - All plant parts contain \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 - In this country, black henbane may have been added to beer to get you more tipsy, death being an occasional side effect\*
- 8 - Black henbane is listed as noxious in \_\_\_\_\_ states nationwide and six counties in Montana

*Solutions are posted to the MSU Extension Invasive Rangeland Weed website:*

<http://www.msuextension.org/invasiveplantsMangold/extensionsub.html>

