

Henbit

Lamium amplexicaule

Henbit is a weed from Eurasia and North Africa that has become well established in North America. It is commonly found on rich soils in waste places and cultivated areas such as gardens, lawns (especially newly seeded lawns), and croplands.

Henbit is a winter annual that germinates late in the summer or early fall, goes dormant during the winter, flowers in early spring or early summer, and then dies.

Henbit is a spreading to erect plant that can branch extensively at the base. These branches can reach 12 inches or more in height. It is a member of the mint family, so it has square stems. The stems can root at the lower nodes. Henbit lacks hairs on the stems and most of the leaves, although the lower leaves sometimes have hairs. The ½ to 1 inch long, circular leaves are opposite with the leaf margins having rounded teeth. Leaves are dark green and pubescent above and lighter colored below.

Lower leaves occur on petioles, while the upper leaves are without petioles and encircle the stem. The two-lipped, ½ to ¾ inch long, pink to purple flowers are located in compact whorls in the axils of the upper leaves. Flowering is usually between April to June and sometimes in September. The fruits are brown and white triangle nutlets that are narrow at the base. Henbit has a fibrous root.



Henbit may resemble red deadnettle (*Lamium purpureum*), but lacks the soft, hairy appearance and the reddish, closely set upper leaves.

Digging can be done to manage henbit, but can bring seeds to the surface. Cultivation, rototilling, hoeing or hand pulling are very effective measures to eliminate the weed. A healthy turf area to provide competition will prevent weed establishment. Mowing to prevent seed production and moving regularly at the proper height for the lawn type can help minimize weed growth and invasion.

There are some pesticides that can be used for henbit control, with glyphosate products applied as a spot treatment or on bare ground areas. In landscape areas such as shrub beds, dichlobenil may be used.

In turf or lawn areas 2,4-D+MCPP+dicamba can be used. Be careful applying products containing dicamba around flowers, tree and shrub roots. Apply any pesticide according to the label directions.

Resources:

Hortsense—<http://pep.wsu.edu/Hortsense>

http://www.turf.uiuc.edu/weed_web/descriptions/henbit.htm

Weeds of the West