



# Rush Skeletonweed *Chondrilla juncea* L.

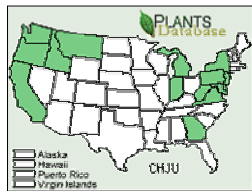
**Common Names:** skeletonweed, hogbite, rush skeletonweed

**Native Origin:** Its native range extends from Western Europe and North Africa to central Asia

**Description:** Rush skeletonweed is a deep-rooted forb in the sunflower family, growing 1 to 4 feet in height. Sharply-lobed leaves, similar to those of dandelion, form a rosette that withers as the flower stem develops. Other leaves up the stem are inconspicuous, narrow, and entire. Each rosette produces 1 flowering stem, with multiple spreading or ascending branches. A distinguishing characteristic of rush skeletonweed is the presence of coarse, downward pointing brown hairs near the base of the stem. Flowerheads are produced near the ends of stems, either individually or in groups of 2 to 5, each with 9 to 12 flowers. Seeds are about 0.1 inch long, with a slender beak at the top, bearing a copious pappus of numerous capillary bristles. The leaf, stem, and roots exude milky latex when cut or broken. It has a slender, simple taproot that can reach over 6.5 feet deep and branch at depth into C-horizon soil and fissures in bedrock.



**Habitat:** It favors coarse-textured, well-drained soils such as sand dunes, granite outcrops, and other coarse soils. It is a species of disturbed roadsides, river banks, dry river beds, degraded coastal dunes, and eroded ground. It may be extremely abundant on waste land and in fallow and abandoned fields but is seldom reported as a troublesome weed in crops.



**Distribution:** This species is reported from states shaded on Plant Database map.

**Ecological Impacts:** Rush skeletonweed is able to thrive where soil disturbance occurs. Removal of natural vegetation and/or cultivation may provide opportunities for establishment. It competes for water and nitrogen. It can reduce native species and forage for livestock and wildlife.

**Control and Management:** To prevent establishment and spread of rush skeletonweed, dispersal of seeds and root fragments must be prevented, as well as vegetative spread from infested sites. Once eradicated, plant areas with suitable native species

- **Manual-** Hand-pull small infestations when soil is wet remove plant growth 2 or 3 times per year for 6 to 10 years to keep new plants from emerging from severed roots and buried seeds. Destroy hand pulled plants by burning. Mowing infestations regularly may reduce aerial biomass, root biomass, root carbohydrate, and seed crop.
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as 2,4-D. There are many possible ways to apply such herbicides, e.g., on foliage, on cut stems, as an injection, or as a basal spray directed to the bark of uncut stems. Repeat applications may be necessary to reduce densities. Follow label and state requirements. Managers should evaluate the specific circumstances of each infestation, seek professional advice and guidance if necessary, and use the herbicide in a manner that is consistent with the product label and other state requirements
- **Biological Control-** Three biological control agents released for control in North America are:

Agent name	Type of agent	States established	Feeding site/effects
<i>Cystiphora schmidtii</i>	gall midge	CA, ID, OR, WA	Rosette, leaves, stems. Reduces photosynthesis and stresses plant
<i>Eriophyes chondrillae</i>	gall mite	CA, ID, OR, WA	Rosette, leaves, stems. May kill seedlings or young plants, reduces flower and seed production; most effective of the 3 in PNW
<i>Puccinia chondrillina</i>	rust fungus	CA, ID, MD, OR, VA, WA	Rosettes, leaves, stem. May kill young plants, stresses older plants.

**References:** [www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/forb/chojun/all.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/forb/chojun/all.html), <http://plants.usda.gov>  
[www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=0022088](http://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=0022088),  
[www.nwcb.wa.gov/weed\\_info/Written\\_findings/Chondrilla\\_juncea.html](http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/weed_info/Written_findings/Chondrilla_juncea.html)

