



A Northern Nevada Homeowner's Guide to Identifying and Managing Chicory

Susan Donaldson, Water Quality and Weed Specialist

Wendy Hanson Mazet, Master Gardener Program Coordinator and Horticulturist

Other common names: Blue daisy, blue sailors, coffeeweed, wild bachelor's buttons, wild endive

Scientific name: *Cichorium intybus*

Family: Asteraceae

Description: Chicory grows up to 3 or more feet tall, with most of the leaves growing at the base of the plant. This gives a skeleton-like appearance to the upper part of the plant. The leaves have been used as salad greens, and the root as a coffee substitute.

Leaves: Basal leaves are large and somewhat toothed or sometimes deeply lobed. Leaves are smooth or hairy. Upper leaves are small and have smooth edges or small lobes, and clasp the stem.

Stems: Erect, round and stiffly branched. The lower part of the stem is hairy. Stems are hollow and produce a milky sap when broken.

Flowers: Blue or sometimes purple or white flowers occur in groups of one to three where leaves join the stems. The tips of the petals are squared off and toothed. Individual flowers only open for a single day.

Roots: Grows a deep taproot that oozes a bitter, milky sap when broken or cut.

Native to: Europe

Where it grows: Pastures, fence lines, poorly maintained turf, roadsides and disturbed sites; prefers moist conditions

Life cycle: Perennial (grows back each year from the roots)

Reproduction: Reproduces by seed



Typical plant growing in disturbed site.



Seedlings leaves are smooth and have a few teeth.

(Top photo by W. Hanson Mazet;
bottom photo by J. DiTomaso, UCCE)

Control methods: Chicory continues to be grown as a crop plant, so little information is available on control.

Mechanical: Dig, hoe or pull small patches.

Chicory can be successfully controlled by deep cultivation or tillage. It will regrow after mowing.

Cultural: Encourage thick, competitive vegetation. Chicory is not competitive.

Biological: No biological control agents are available. Chicory is used as a forage species in some areas and tolerates grazing.

Chemical: Apply broadleaf-selective herbicides such as 2,4-D + dicamba on young plants. Glyphosate may also be effective but is nonselective and can kill or damage other plants, including lawn grasses.

References:

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The stems are stiffly branched and have few leaves above.



The leaves have a pale midrib with hairs on the underside.



The tips of the flower petals are squared and toothed.

(Photos by S. Donaldson)

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