



Rush Skeletonweed



flower



seeds



stems

Rush Skeletonweed

Genus: Chondrilla

Species: juncea

Priority Listing: 1B

Perennial

Rush skeletonweed gets its name from the lack of leaves on the upper part of the plant, giving the plant a 'skeletal' appearance. This plant native to Europe, Asia and North Africa, and is thought to have been brought to North America as a contaminant in animal bedding or contaminated seed around 1872.

The **rosette** leaves of this plant look very similar to dandelion leaves. If cut or scraped, the leaves and stem of this plant ooze a white, milky latex substance that has been researched for making rubber. Coarse downward pointing brown hairs cover the bottom section of the stem of this plant.

Rush skeleton weed flowers from June through September, producing yellow flower heads that are $\frac{3}{4}$ " in

diameter. Flower heads can occur singly or in groups of up to five per stem. Each plant has the capability to produce 500 to 1,500 seeds per growing season. Seeds are light brown to black in color, ribbed and have white bristly hairs, called **pappus**, at the top that aids in transportation for spreading the seed. This plant is a fierce competitor after a disturbance like a fire; this plant has the capability to re-sprout, giving it an edge over native plants that take longer to regenerate.

Rush skeletonweed can tolerate extended periods of drought, occupies disturbed habitats, and reproduces by seed and **lateral** roots. If cut, a root section less than 1" in length can produce a new plant.



Photo courtesy of Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org

Lateral roots: roots forming on the side of a taproot

Pappus: a group of flower sepals which have feather or hair-like qualities, such as a dandelion seed

Perennial: a plant whose life spans several years

Rosette: circular clusters of leaves that radiate from a center of a plant, close to the ground, like the dandelion