

Bouncingbet

Colorado Department of
Agriculture

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Key ID Points

1. Leaves are opposite, smooth, and 2-4 inches long.
2. Flowers have five petals and are generally light pink to white.

Bouncingbet Identification and Management



Identification and Impacts

Bouncingbet (*Saponaria officinalis*) is a perennial forb. The flowers are crowded at the ends of branches, and have five petals that are generally light pink to white and slightly notched at the apex. Flowering begins in July and continues until September. The fruits are many-seeded capsules and seeds are dull-black and roundish or kidney-shaped. Bouncingbet reproduces by seed and spreads by rhizomatous swollen nodes. Leaves are opposite, smooth, narrow, 2 to 4 inches long and have three distinct veins from the base. The stems are erect, sparingly branched, smooth, and forming. Mature plants grow up to three feet tall.

Bouncingbet can be poisonous to livestock and humans. It is generally considered unpalatable to livestock. The plant contains sapogenic glycosides that cause gastrointestinal irritation and can destroy red blood cells when absorbed in the blood streams of grazing animals.

The habitat of Bouncingbet is often found in large dense patches on hillsides, along rivers, roadsides, meadows, and waste areas. It prefers moist, well-drained soil, and full sun to partial shade and is currently found primarily in municipal areas and nearby wildlands. Bouncingbet spreads rapidly, replacing

more valuable species (e.g. perennial grasses). Bouncingbet is increasingly common in Colorado, particularly in residential areas and local open spaces where it has escaped as an ornamental species. Bouncingbet was originally introduced from Europe as a garden ornamental.

The key to effective control of Bouncingbet is early detection and prevention of new infestations, since it is not yet widespread in Colorado. If infestations are discovered, they should be controlled immediately, and all seed production prevented. Since Bouncingbet usually grows in dense patches it is relatively easy to spot and treat. Be aware that this species is often found in wet areas, which may restrict the use of certain herbicides. As with all perennial weeds that have extensive root systems, the key to controlling Bouncingbet, is to eliminate seed production while depleting the nutrient reserves in the roots. Details on the back of this sheet can help to create a management plan compatible with your site ecology.

Bouncingbet is designated as a "List B" species in the Colorado Noxious Weed Act. It is required to be either eradicated, contained, or suppressed depending on the local infestations. For more information visit www.colorado.gov/ag/csd and click on the Noxious Weed Management Program. Or call the State Weed Coordinator at the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Conservation Services Division, 303-239-4100.



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Saponaria officinalis

**CULTURAL**

Prevent the establishment of new infestations by minimizing disturbance and seed dispersal, eliminating seed production and maintaining healthy native communities. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service for seed mix recommendations. Maintain healthy pastures and prevent bare spots caused by overgrazing.

**BIOLOGICAL**

There is no biological control available for Bouncingbet. Since biological control agents take years to research, develop and release, no releases are expected in the foreseeable future. For more information, contact the Palisade Insectary of the Colorado Department of Agriculture at 970-464-7916.

**MECHANICAL**

Physical or mechanical control of Bouncingbet is NOT recommended because the plant reproduces clonally from its root system. Handpull or dig only single plants/new infestations when soil is moist to make certain entire root system is excavated.

Integrated Weed Management:

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HERBICIDES

NOTE: The following are recommendations for herbicides that can be applied to range and pasturelands. Rates are approximate and based on equipment with an output of 30 gal/acre. Please read label for exact rates. **Always read, understand, and follow the label directions. The herbicide label is the LAW!**

HERBICIDE	RATE	APPLICATION TIMING
Chlorsulfuron (Telar)	1 oz product/A + 0.25% v/v	Apply at bolting to bud growth stage. (Late Spring to Mid Summer)