



Purple Toadflax (*Linaria purpurea*)

Linaria purpurea or purple toadflax is a purple-flowered plant native to Italy, part of the plantain family (Plantaginaceae). It is sometimes planted in gardens and is also an introduced weed in New Zealand, North America and other parts of Europe.

Description

It is a perennial herbaceous plant growing 30 to 70 centimeters tall with linear leaves 2 to 5 centimeters in length. The inflorescence is a raceme of flowers occupying the top of the stem. The flower is between 1 and 2 centimeters long with five lobes arranged into two lips with a spur at the end. The flower is usually light to medium purple in color. The fruit is a capsule.

There is a pale pink cultivar of the species named 'Canon Went'.

Toxicity and chemistry

This plant is poisonous to livestock, though ruminants may tend to avoid consuming it. The larvae of some species of Lepidoptera (butterflies) use this plant as a food source. In a recent study conducted in Italy the plant was found to contain a compound exhibiting antifungal activity, which drastically reduced the production of aflatoxin B1 in *Aspergillus flavus*, making it a potential natural and 'green' anti-aflatoxin B1 agent suitable for use in the food industry.

Control

Start control work at margins to prevent further seeding, and work downstream where possible.

1. Spray: glyphosate (10ml/L). Respray until eliminated.
2. Spray terrestrial sites: triclopyr 600 EC (30ml/10L) or triclopyr 120g/L (15ml/L). Follow up 3-monthly.