



Weed of The Week

Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*)

Henbit is a winter annual weed that is commonly mistaken for purple deadnettle. Henbit grows during any period of warm weather that occurs in winter. Henbit has a square stem like other mint family members. The stem can be green or purple in color with small hairs. Leaves are rounded, coarsely toothed, hairy, and deeply veined. The leaves of henbit are more rounded and scalloped and clasp the stem directly – they do not have a leaf petiole. Flowers are in whorls in the axils of the upper leaves. Flowers are pink to dark purple and fused into a two-lipped tube shape. In comparison, purple deadnettle has triangular upper leaves, on petioles, that are distinctly red- or purple-tinted, unlike the upper leaves of henbit. Henbit ranges from 4 inches to 1 foot in height. This plant can be an important early-season source of nectar and pollen for honeybees and bumblebees.

Henbit is often a problem in open areas of gardens or in weak, thin lawns. It does not compete well if you maintain a dense turf with proper mowing and fertilizing. Plants are easy to pull by hand or to hoe out when small. Plants should be removed before they flower and set seed to prevent further infestation. Tillage in early fall during the daytime can increase henbit germination. However, henbit seedlings are readily controlled by late-fall and early-spring tillage. Henbit is easily controlled with herbicides. Fall and early spring herbicide applications are generally most effective and may also suppress seed production.

