

Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*)

Description

An annual of bare or disturbed ground, this low plant is semi-parasitic on the roots of its neighbors. It's straggly, branched and its hard stems are often slightly red. The pink-purple flowers (8-10mm long) have a two lipped corolla, the lower lip being three-lobed, with bracts mostly longer than the flowers. The flowers are in one-sided, slightly curved, leafy spikes and appear from June to September. The leaves are narrow, toothed and sessile, being opposite below and alternate above. Native to Europe and Asia, occurring as an invasive species in North America.

Key Identifiers

- ✓ Densely hairy stem and leaves
- ✓ Flowers grow where leaves join stem
- ✓ Small snapdragon like flowers
- ✓ Reddish tinge in infestations at maturity

Location in Canada

Not known to be in Alberta. However, all provinces, excluding BC and Labrador, have populations, according to the USDA Plants Database. Manitoba is believed to have started the infestations from crates returned from West Germany to the Gimli base in the 1950's.

Resources

<http://invasiveplants.ab.ca/Downloads/FS-RedBartsia.pdf>

http://www.aphotoflora.com/d_odontites_vernus_red_bartsia.html

Similar species

Red Samphire (*Salicornia rubra*) a native to North America could be confused at maturity for red bartsia when looking for red fall infestations. Red Samphire has scale like leaves and doesn't resemble Red Bartsia at close inspection.

http://em.ca/garden/native/nat_salicornia_rubra.html



Michelle Ammeter, Weed Supervisor, Macdonald Weed District, Manitoba

