

# Mountain Bluet

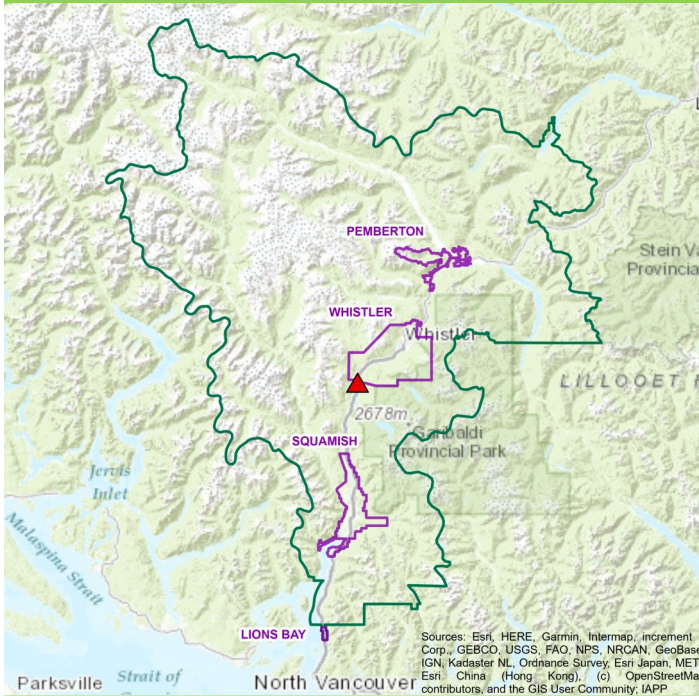
*Centaurea montana*

(AKA. Perennial Cornflower)

FACT SHEET

Squamish: Insufficient info | Whistler: Insufficient info | Pemberton: Insufficient info

## DISTRIBUTION



**Origin:** Mountain Bluet is a long-lasting perennial that was brought over from Europe as a medicinal plant. It is now used widely as a garden ornamental.

**Habitat:** Mountain Bluet is hardy and drought-tolerant, growing well in most soil types and climates. The long-living perennial plant prefers full sun to partial shade and well-drained soils. Mountain Bluet is most commonly found in meadows, pastures, ditches and disturbed areas. It is frequently found in gardens and often escapes into adjacent areas.

**Reproduction:** Mountain Bluet reproduces by seed as well as vegetatively, via rhizomes. It is self-seeding: the flowers contain both male and female organs, so they can self-pollinate. The seeds can remain viable in the soil for several years.

**Distribution:** Mountain Bluet is more common than the above map suggests. SSISC crews are actively adding observations to our database, and we are asking people to **report locations of this species**, so its distribution can be better understood.

## IDENTIFICATION



**Flowers:** Delicate compound disk flowers, 5 - 8 cm wide, with blue ray petals and black-fringed bracts on the base of each flower. Flowers contain both male and female organs. Can re-bloom in late summer, early fall

**Stems:** Are several to many, erect, upright, unbranched and slightly hairy. Mountain Bluet grows to be 30 - 80 cm tall.

**Leaves:** Lanced-shaped to egg-shaped, with a woolly underside. Leaves are 10 - 30 cm long and arranged alternately along the stem.

**Roots:** Mountain Bluet has a taproot.

**Fruits:** Seeds are light yellow to golden, glossy and about 5 mm long, with a short pappus (cluster of hairs).

### Similar Species:

- **Native:** Blue Thimble Flower (*Gilia capitata*), Large-leaved lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllus*)
- **Invasive:** Bachelor's Buttons (*Centaurea cyanus*)

The foliage of Bachelor's Buttons is finer, and it is an annual plant, unlike Mountain Bluet.

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**Vectors of Spread:** Seeds may be spread by livestock, farm equipment, vehicles, and humans. Mountain Bluet is also spread through the horticulture trade, as it is unfortunately sold as an ornamental. Lastly, Mountain Bluet can spread through the improper disposal of garden waste.

#### WHAT CAN I DO?

**Mountain Bluet is found in communities of the Sea to Sky Region, PREVENTION of further spread is key:**

- **Do not purchase, trade or plant Mountain Bluet.**
- Regularly monitor properties for infestations.
- Ensure soil and gravel are uncontaminated before transport
- Don't unload, park, or store equipment or vehicles in infested areas; remove plant material from any equipment, vehicles, or clothing before leaving infested areas.
- Minimize soil disturbances (e.g. use grazing plans that prevent soil exposure from overgrazing), and use seed mixes with dense, early colonization (e.g. alfalfa or barley) to re-vegetate exposed soil and resist invasion.
- Ensure plants (particularly flowering heads or root fragments) are bagged or covered to prevent spread during transport to designated disposal sites (e.g. landfill). **Do NOT compost.**

**Mountain Bluet can be controlled by:**

- **Mechanical Control:** Repeated hand-pulling is the most effective way to control infestations of Mountain Bluet; ensure the root system has been removed. Repeated cutting or mowing before plants set seed each year can also be effective, however any roots left intact can re-sprout. If an infestation is well established, it is likely that a seedbank has already formed, so mechanical removals will need to be repeated until all seeds have germinated or expired.
- **Chemical Control:** Effective herbicides include dicamba, 2,4-D, clopyralid, aminopyralid, and glyphosate. Picloram is also effective, but it is not appropriate to use in coastal, moist soils. Herbicides can be applied using wick-on or selective spot-spraying to minimize non-target damage. We recommend that any herbicide application is carried out by a person holding a valid BC Pesticide Applicator Certificate. Before selecting and applying herbicides, you must review and follow herbicide labels and application rates; municipal, regional, provincial and federal laws and regulations; species-specific treatment recommendations, and site-specific goals and objectives.
- **Biological Control:** No biocontrol agents are currently available for this species.

**If you suspect you have found Mountain Bluet anywhere in the Sea to Sky region:**

**Contact** the Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council to report and for the most recent, up to date control methods. All reports will be kept confidential.

**References:** Canadensys, E-flora BC, Fraser Valley Invasive Species Society, Invasive Species Compendium, Invasive Species Council of BC, NatureGate, Northwest Invasive Plants Council, Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.

## IMPACTS

#### Ecological:

- Colonizes quickly, and can grow into thick stands, displacing native plants.
- Can alter native plant-pollinator interactions and reduce forage opportunities for wildlife and livestock.

#### Economic:

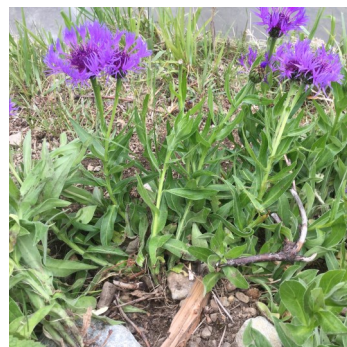
- Outcompetes forage species.
- Can lead to decreased food sources for livestock.



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## REPORT SIGHTINGS

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