

#bepesticidefree

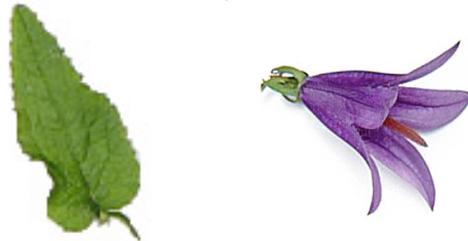
problem pests: Rover Bellflower

What exactly is it?

Rover Bellflower (*Campanula rapunculoides*), also called Roving Bellflower, Creeping Bellflower, and Rampion Bellflower, is a perennial plant, which grows 60cm–120cm (2–4 feet) tall. It has an attractive stalk of violet-blue bell-shaped flowers, and heart-shaped leaves. Rover Bellflower has both shallow fibrous roots and a horizontal fleshy root (rhizome).

This plant originates from Europe and is extremely hardy. It can quickly take over a yard due to its ability to reproduce from even a few centimetres of its extensive rhizomes. It is also able to reproduce from seed, making weeding difficult since it can travel and reproduce in a variety of ways. The average Rover Bellflower can produce 3000 – 15000 seeds annually.

While the flowering is quite pretty, many gardeners struggle with trying to control this weed each year. The weed is very invasive and is a problem throughout Saskatoon yards and gardens.



How to Deal

Prevention:

Enrich your lawn! Mow high (5-10 cm or 3 inches), fertilize with organic compost, power rake (to remove thatch) and aerate in the spring, and don't forget to over-seed in the fall and spring. Keeping lawn roots thick and strong promotes a thick lawn that is less susceptible to Rover Bellflower. Mowing will not cut Rover Bellflower, since the leaves are too shallow to be cut by even the lowest mower height. If you have a full grown and flowering plant, deadhead the blooms before they spread their seeds.



How to Identify Rover Bellflower

Leaves:

- heart shaped, with an oval base and a pointed tip,
- fine teeth along the edge of the leaf.
- green with a dull texture, the underside is somewhat pale and glossy.
- leaves pull out easily

Roots:

- extensive rhizomatous system, laterally-spreading roots that are white.
- shallow fibrous roots

Stem:

- blossoming from the bottom up.

Flowers:

- blue to purple colour
- bell-shaped with a star like front-view
- multiple flowers on a vertical stalk, each being 2.5-3.5cm (1-1.5 inches) wide across.
- flowers last from late June to the end of August.



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Mechanical Controls (pulling and digging):

Sometimes you just have to get down and dig. The roots are very extensive, so you may feel like you are fighting a losing battle. These are a few hints that may help:

1. Weed early in the spring. If you get them when they first pop up, the roots will not be very extensive and you can get them before they spread too far.
2. Be consistent. Don't let the roots take over- you will have to dig throughout the season.
3. Your goal is to get to the large tubers which run up to 6 inches below the soil. But, be sure to get all of the shallow tubers as you are digging too. Leave no rhizome behind ... they will sprout again!
4. Be sure to discard the roots in a bucket and throw into the garbage. This plant can take root everywhere and the compost may miss it in the decomposing process, which means you will plant it all over again.
5. Use some good digging tools to access the roots. Commercially available tools include:



Long-term Management:



There are no natural predators for this weed (except maybe gardeners!), so you need to be very persistent, and vigilant in pulling up roots. Rover Bellflower is extremely resilient and can grow in most soil and sun conditions.

If Rover Bellflower has taken over a good percentage of an area, and has choked out all other growth, you will want to cover the area to prevent nutrients from getting to the greedy roots. Use a shade cloth, plastic covering, or other thick mulch over the course of a growing season to kill the roots. If you can, leave it fallow when the covering is removed, and let nature take over. If more of the leaves pop up, you will see if there are more roots to dig and smother. Repeat the mulching treatment.

This method is long-term and takes patience and care, but it will be the most effective at ridding this pest from your yard.



To learn more about the information in this factsheet:

Visit the University of Saskatchewan's Garden Line website: <http://agbio.usask.ca/gardenline>

For tips on gardening, visit: www.davesgarden.com

Book: Ecological Gardening; Your path to a Healthy Garden by Marjorie Harris

Images taken from: <http://www.sixwise.com/images/articles/2008/07/01/hand-weeding.jpg>,
<http://www.alcorngallery.com/Campanula.jpeg>

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