

Washington Invasive Ranking System

Washington Natural Heritage Program

Verbascum blattaria (Moth Mullein)

Assessed by

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Ecological Impact Rank: **Insignificant** (13)

Confidence: **Moderate** (50)

Management Difficulty Rank: Insignificant (9)

Confidence: High (70)

Biological Characteristics of Invasiveness: Insignificant (23)

Confidence: Moderate (46)

Concern Related to Distribution and Abundance: High (70)

Confidence: Low (30)



Photo Credit: Photo by iNaturalist observer sanderee2, 2024, used under Creative Commons license (iNaturalist Community, 2024).

Ranking Notes

Rapid assessment only, based primarily on professional expertise.

Legal Listings

[Washington State Weed Board](#): No

[Washington Invasive Species Council](#): No

Section 1: Distribution and Abundance

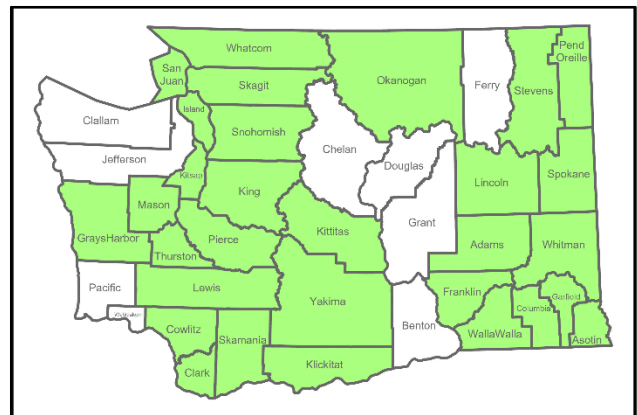


Figure 1. Distribution of counties where *Verbascum blattaria* has been documented in Washington State (CPNWH, 2024; EDDMapS, 2024; iNaturalist Community, 2024).

Q1: Current Range Size in Washington

Rating: High

Confidence: Moderate

Verbascum blattaria is documented in 77% of counties in Washington State (CPNWH, 2024; EDDMapS, 2024; iNaturalist Community, 2024).

Source: Herbarium records and other records

Q2: Current Trend in Total Range

Rating: Unknown

Confidence: Not Rated

This species may be slowly spreading to new areas.

Source: Professional expertise

Q3: Proportion of Potential Range Currently Unoccupied

Rating: Not Rated

Confidence: Not Rated

Source:

Q4: Local Range Expansion or Change in Abundance

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

The assessor has observed this species slowing increasing in Clark County.

Source: Professional expertise

Q5: Diversity of Ecosystems Invaded

Ecosystem types: Grassland & Shrubland, Emergent Open Wetland

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: Moderate

May also infrequently occur in forested wetlands.

Source: Professional expertise

Section 2: Biological Characteristics

Q6: Aggressive Mode of Reproduction

Rating: No

Confidence: Moderate

This species doesn't seem to produce high seed numbers.

Source: Professional expertise

Q7: Innate Potential for Long-Distance Dispersal

Rating: No

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q8: Potential to be Spread by Human Activities

Rating: Unknown

Confidence: Not Rated

Source:

Q9: Allelopathy

Rating: No

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q10: Competitive for Limiting Abiotic Factors

Rating: No

Confidence: Low

This species is likely not a strong competitor, relying more on disturbance.

Source: Professional expertise

Q11: Growth Form

Rating: No

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q12: Germination Requirements

Rating: No

Confidence: Low



This species likely requires bare soil for germination.

Source: Professional expertise

Q13: Invasiveness of Other Plants in Genus

Rating: Yes

Confidence: Moderate

Verbascum thapsus (Giant mullein) is listed as invasive by the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA, 2023), and is tracked by the Oklahoma Invasive Plant Council (OkIPC, 2024) and the Texas Invasive Species Institute (2024). Unofficial sources also treat this species as an invasive (e.g., Remaley, 2009).

Verbascum thapsus is also introduced in the Pacific Northwest but is usually not considered invasive and is not tracked by any states in the region. British Columbia lists this species a nuisance, but not in need of management (Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health, 2025).

Source: Informal publication, Professional expertise

Q14: Shade Tolerance

Rating: Low/Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

This plant is likely shade intolerant.

Source: Professional expertise

Q15: Disturbance Tolerance

Rating: No

Confidence: High

Verbascum blattaria requires disturbance such as fire to establish but does not appear to gain a significant competitive advantage over native species following disturbance.

Source: Professional expertise

Q16: Propagule Persistence

Rating: >20 years

Confidence: High

At least some *Verbascum blattaria* seeds have been shown to remain viable for at least 120 years in controlled conditions (Telewski & Zeevaart, 2002).

Source: Published research

Q17: Palatability

Rating: Not Rated

Confidence: Not Rated

Source:

Section 3: Ecological Impact

Q18: Impact on Ecosystem Abiotic Processes

Abiotic Processes: Nutrient dynamics, Light availability

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q19: Impact on Ecosystem Structure

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

This species sometimes forms groups that can crowd out other plants, but impact is likely minor.

Source: Professional expertise

Q20: Impact on Ecosystem Composition

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

This species could compete with natives but the impact is likely low.

Source: Professional expertise

Q21: Impact on Particular Native Species

Rating: Unknown

Confidence: Not Rated

Source:



Q22: Observed Ability to Invade Undisturbed Ecosystems

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q23: Observed Ability to Invade Naturally Disturbed Ecosystems

Rating: Yes

Confidence: High

This plant is primarily found in ecosystems with naturally frequent fire regimes, such as prairies.

Source: Professional expertise

Section 4: Management Difficulty

Q24: General Management Difficulty

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

This plant is both relatively uncommon and not seen as a priority for control. This species is easily controlled with herbicide where it occurs.

Source: Professional expertise

Q25: Minimum Time Commitment

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q26: Impacts of Management on Native Species

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q27: Inaccessibility of Invaded Areas

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q28: Sociopolitical Implications of Management

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Additional Comments

None

References

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