

WEED FILE:

**DANDELION, HAWKBIT,
CATSEAR, HAWKSBEARD**
Part 1



Dandelion Flower
Dandelion Stem



Taraxacum officinale – Dandelion
Leontodon taraxacoides – Hawkbit
Hypochoeris radicata – Catsear
Crepis capillaris – Hawksbeard

What a bonus! Four weeds for the price of one! Actually, these four weeds are covered together in a single Weed File because they are very similar in appearance, and are often confused (that is we are confused, not the weeds). So it will help with telling them apart properly if we cover them all here, while contrasting their different recognition features.

DESCRIPTION

They are all like dandelion-style weeds, growing from a fairly flat rosette and producing yellow flowers on erect stems. So it's not surprising that they are regularly confused with each other.

Let's get the major recognition differences covered right up front.

Dandelion

Has unbranched flower stems with a large (to 5cm dia) single flower, and the stems are hollow, containing milky sap. The leaf stalk is also hollow. The leaves are hairless.

Hawkbit

Has unbranched flower stems with single flowers, but the stems are solid, not hollow. The leaves are normally hairy, and the leaf hairs are forked into a T shape at the tip.

Catsear

Has sparingly branched and leafless flower stems, and hairy bristles on the leaves, the ends of which do look very like a cat's ear.

Hawksbeard

Has a very branched, leafy flower stem with multiple though smaller flowers, with hairless leaves. Hawksbeard is also the only one of the four that is an annual, rather than perennial weed.

HABITAT

These are all referred to as 'flat weeds', and

are distributed throughout New Zealand. The preferred habitats are many, and these weeds all appear regularly in pastures, lawns, turf and sports grounds, as well as roadsides and waste areas. Hawksbit is also more likely than the others to appear in crops and gardens. Because these weeds are flat in their vegetative stage, they tend to survive mowing, which makes them a particular problem in sports and recreational fields.

In pasture, these weeds are a not usually a serious problem, unless they begin to dominate, in which case it points to a run down pasture that needs to be sprayed out and re-sown. One situation in which catsear justifies control even in smaller infestations is in horse pasture, because the plant is thought to be associated with a health condition in horses known as Australian stringhalt.

HERBICIDE CONTROL

These weeds are susceptible to most common general-purpose herbicides, but their selective control is difficult without causing clover damage.

Non-selective control

- **Granny** granulated glyphosate at 1.3-2.2kg/Ha, or
- **Glyphosate 360g/L** at 3-5L/Ha, or

Selective Control

- **GrassMate** at 2L/Ha for area spraying, or at 60ml/10L for spot spraying. Note: this spray will severely damage clovers.
- **MCPA 750** at 2-3L in 200-300L water per Ha for control of seedling flat weeds in pasture and young turf. This spray may cause some temporary clover suppression.

In all cases better control will result from the addition of **SprayWetter** penetrant to the spray mix at 100-200ml per 100L water.

