



# Bladder Champion

*Silene cucubalus*



## Overview:

This plant is often confused with white cockle and night flowering catchfly as the flowers are very similar, but bladder champion has smooth leaves and stems while the other two are very hairy. Introduced from Europe, bladder champion is a deep-rooted perennial plant. Reproducing both by seed and vegetatively by sprouting from lateral branches of its deep taproot. Severed root pieces can produce new plants.

## Habitat:

Bladder champion will grow under a wide range of conditions, but prefers medium to coarse, well-drained soils.

## Identification:

**Stems:** Stems are erect, smooth and hairless, growing up to 50 cm tall. There are several branching stems per plant, forming clumps. Stems are swollen where the leaves attach (nodes).

**Leaves:** Leaves are lance shaped, wavy

and very variable in size – 3-8cm, attaching in opposite pairs. Leaves have a distinctive centre crease.

**Flowers:** Flowers consist of 5 white petals that are deeply lobed or split, and occur in clusters at the ends of stems. The base of the flower (calyx) becomes inflated (bladder-like), veiny and purplish brown as the plant matures. The calyx terminates at the flower with 5 short, triangular teeth.

**Seed:** One plant may produce as many as 20,000 seeds.

## Prevention:

Insisting on the purity of purchased seed and forage will prevent this plant's spread onto both private and public lands.

## Control:

**Grazing:** Not grazed. Invasive plants should never be considered as forage.

**Cultivation:** Cultivation can be effective as long as it is deep enough to cut the roots off below the root crown and must be repeated

for at least two seasons. Care must be taken not to transport root pieces that could start new infestations elsewhere.

**Mechanical:** Frequent mowing to prevent seed production can help contain an existing infestation.

**Chemical:** Hexazinone and Imazapyr are registered for use on bladder champion. Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the target plant in Canada by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Always read and follow label directions. Consult your local Agricultural Fieldman or Certified Pesticide Dispenser for more information.

**Biological:** Results of preliminary host range tests for *Hadena perplexa* found this agent was not specific to *S. vulgaris*'.

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# Bladder Champion (Continued)



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## REFERENCES

- 1 <http://www.cabdirect.org/abstracts/19921156006.html>