



Can you recognize these weeds of blueberry fields and do you know how to control them?



## Notes on Some Weeds of Lowbush Blueberry Fields<sup>1</sup>

Refer to Guide to Weed Control for Wild Blueberry Production in Atlantic Canada (rev. 2004) as a guide and the product label for detailed information on herbicide treatments.

1. **Black bulrush.** A large sedge with triangular stems that spreads only by seed. Can be controlled with spot applications of Ultim DF applied in mid to late June. Cutting in July and August will prevent seed formation.
2. **Cow wheat.** A weakly-rooted native annual that comes each year from seed. Heavy infestations clog harvesters. No recommended control.
3. **Lamb's-quarters.** A common annual weed up to 2 m tall that comes each year from seed. Potentially a very serious problem in both sprout and crop year. Prevent weed from going to seed when first seen. Susceptible to wiping with Roundup. Reportedly controlled by Sinbar or by crop-year Velpar.
4. **Bunchberry (or pigeon berry).** A native perennial spreading by rootstocks. Can be controlled by Spartan DF applied in the spring of the sprout year when the first white flowers appear and the blueberry shoots are < 2.5 cm. Later applications are less effective and may stunt blueberry growth.
5. **Lion's paw.** Red-stemmed, Velpar-tolerant perennial to 1 m tall with drooping white flowers. Would likely be controlled by wiping with Roundup.
6. **Narrow-leaved goldenrod.** The most common goldenrod spreading by rhizomes and seed. Does not appear to be Velpar tolerant; likely escapes reduced rates. Controlled by wiping Roundup. Crop year Velpar applications have been effective in reducing stands of this weed.
7. **White spruce.** Like all other conifer tree species, generally tolerant to Velpar, Roundup and most herbicides. Conifers do not regenerate from crowns or roots. Hence they can be controlled by cutting below the lowest branch or by burning.
8. **St. John's wort.** No effect herbicide treatment although Velpar may control seedlings and small plants. Large plants may respond to wiping with Roundup. Plants are generally short-lived due to a wide-spread pathogen. Smaller, native *Hypericum* species (e.g. Canada St. John's wort) likely of little consequence.
9. **Wild rose.** Do not use Roundup. Excellent control without significant crop injury can be obtained with spot applications of Spartan DF during the summer or early fall of the sprout year.
10. **Wire birch.** Like most native tree species (e.g. poplar, maples, willows), birches are susceptible to wiping with Roundup during the summer. Applications of Garlon 4 in oil to the lower stem or cut stump are also effective and can be done at any time of the year.
11. **New York aster.** One of several tall perennial asters that escape reduced rates of Velpar. Large escaping plants can be controlled with wiping Roundup.
12. **Trailing blackberry.** Very diverse group of subspecies with trailing stems that arise from a single, woody crown. No satisfactory selective control but consider the following. The greatest ratio of top growth to crown tissue is in the fall of the crop year. Foliar treatments may be most effective then. Delaying application until early October when blueberry leaves are turning red and falling may decrease crop damage from applications of Roundup or Banvel. 'Painting' the basal portions of stems with Garlon 4 in oil may be effective.
13. **Bush honeysuckle.** Native, Velpar-tolerant perennial shrub with opposite leaves and paired yellow flowers. Sensitive to wiping with Roundup or several spot applications of Spartan DF.
14. **Spreading dogbane.** Upright perennial spreading from rhizomes with red stems containing a white latex. Can be controlled by wiping with Roundup.

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<sup>1</sup>Some of these species have no recommended control. If you've had success in controlling these species, let us know by contacting Klaus Jensen at (902) 679-5761 or [jensenk@agr.gc.ca](mailto:jensenk@agr.gc.ca).

15. **Sheep laurel (or lambkill).** Native, woody, evergreen shrub usually controlled with the maximum rate of Velpar. Can also be controlled with fall (of crop year) wiper or spot applications of Banvel or a 2,4-D and Banvel mixture after blueberry leaves have senesced. The same should control other evergreen species like teaberry and bearberry.
16. **Black huckleberry.** Looks like a clone of large blueberry plants that turn bright red in September. It grows to 1 m or more if not pruned. Avoid pruning patches for one cycle and wipe with Roundup. Other Velpar tolerant shrubs that will grow above the blueberry canopy if not pruned include black chokepear (barrenberry) and bayberry.
17. **False lily-of-the-valley.** One of the earliest emerging plants that may be confused with bunchberry. However, it is not sensitive to Spartan DF. Likely has little effect on the crop.
18. **Hemp nettle.** Common annual weed coming each year from seed. Appears tolerant to Velpar. No recommended control.
19. **Braken fern.** Most common fern, especially on cleared land, spreading rapidly by rhizomes. Control with Spartan DF in early July of sprout year when fronds have fully expanded. Few symptoms observed in the year of application but control in the following year is usually excellent. Also reported to be controlled with several Roundup wiping treatments.
20. **Canadian rhododendron.** Native, branched shrub with showy mauve flowers in late May before foliage appears. Controlled with maximum rate of Velpar. Also sensitive to spot sprays of Roundup or Banvel.
21. **Black knapweed.** Old, established plants with dense, rosette of basal leaves survive Velpar; younger plants are controlled. Like many other herbaceous perennials (St. John's wort, asters, some goldenrods), these may be controlled by spot sprays or wiping Roundup. The rosettes remain green late into the fall and this may be an effective and safer time to apply non-selective spot sprays like Roundup. Because seedlings are sensitive to Velpar, they invade fields rather slowly, and efforts to control early infestations may be worthwhile.
22. **Annual fleabane.** One of several annual species of the aster family (others are Canada fleabane and annual sowthistle) that escape Velpar and produce numerous, wind blown seed. Comes each year from seed and invades fields rapidly. Early invaders should be controlled in both fields and adjacent areas by pulling or wiping.
23. **Sheep sorrel.** Very common, rapidly spreading, perennial that is susceptible to Velpar but re-invades fields. Likely not a serious competitor in years of normal rainfall. No other practical control. However, an important source of *Botrytis* inoculum.
24. **Speckled alder.** Very sensitive to Spartan DF spot sprays. Like some other woody specie (sweetfern, bayberry, willows), retains the foliage late into the fall of the crop year and can be controlled then with spot sprays of Banvel or Banvel plus 2,4-D with less risk of crop injury with careful application.
25. **Meadow goat's-beard.** A Velpar-tolerant biennial with a taproot and milky latex that produces a large dandelion-like flower with wind blown seed in the second year. Potentially a serious problem. See notes on annual fleabane.
26. **Sheep fescue.** Small, wiry, tussock-forming grass with a small seedhead. Populations of both Velpar sensitive and resistant fescues occur. Both are also resistant to Venture. Both are reported to be sensitive to atrazine and Kerb.
27. **Poverty oat grass.** Forms perennial tussocks of sharply-pointed leaves (old, dead leaves curl) and with a cereal-like flowering head. Many populations are tolerant to Velpar but these can be suppressed by Venture in both the sprout and crop year.
28. **Old witch grass.** The most common of several annual grasses found in blueberry fields, but this one is very coarsely hairy. Often tolerant to atrazine and Velpar, but can easily be controlled in the seedling stage with Venture in both the prune and crop year.
29. **Tufted vetch.** A trailing/climbing perennial legume spreading by underground rhizomes and seed. Can be controlled by applying Lontrel 360 ( at 420 mL per hectare) in late June of the sprout year at the early flowering stage of vetch. July and August applications have affected blueberry flower bud formation and reduced yields.