



# Whatcom Weeds

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## JIMSONWEED

### *Datura stramonium*

**THREAT:** Jimsonweed, also called thorn-apple, angel's trumpet and devil's trumpet, is probably a native of eastern North America, but its origins are not clear. This plant has now become naturalized in many areas of the world. It generally grows in disturbed soils, such as in fallow fields, croplands, dry rangelands, construction areas and vacant lots. Jimsonweed does best in sunny locations with fertile soil, but can survive under less favorable conditions. All parts of the plant are toxic, causing hallucinations, convulsions and death, depending on the amount ingested, and the sap can cause a skin rash in some people. Children have been poisoned by sucking the nectar out of the base of the flower or by ingesting the seeds. This plant has been used as a hallucinogenic drug, but users can easily overdose. Jimsonweed reproduces by seed and each plant can produce up to 50 fruit and 25,000 seeds. It can be spread through contaminated seed, crops and soil. Since capsules and seeds can float for 10 hours, dispersal through water also occurs.



**DESCRIPTION:** Jimsonweed is an annual in the same family as nightshade, potato and tomato. It grows up to 5 ft. tall, with smooth, branched stems that are green or purple. Leaves are alternate, large, and unevenly toothed or shallowly lobed, resembling oak leaves. The white to purplish, trumpet-shaped flowers are 3½ to 8 inches long. Jimsonweed flowers from June to September, with the flowers opening in the evening, to accommodate the moths that pollinate them. Brown or black kidney-shaped seeds are borne in prickly egg-shaped capsules, which are 1 to 2 inches long. The capsules are green and rubbery initially, becoming brown and hard as they mature. The capsules eventually split open, allowing release of the seeds. The plant has a strong, unpleasant odor, however, the flowers are fragrant.

**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:** Jimsonweed can be controlled through mechanical and chemical means. Since jimsonweed is an annual, preventing seed production will help prevent future infestations. For small infestations, plants can be hand dug. If controlling the plants through tillage, work should be done before seed production begins. Mowing can also be used to prevent seed production. For site-specific chemical recommendations, contact the weed control board.

