

# Bouncingbet

## *Saponaria officinalis* L.



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**Other common names:** soapwort, lady by the garden gate

**Family:** Caryophyllaceae (Pink)

**USDA Code:** SAOF4

**Bayer Code (WSSA):** SAWOF

**Life cycle classification:** Perennial forb

**Legal Status:** Colorado Noxious weed (general weed)

**Native to:** Europe

**Entry into Colorado:** Probably introduced as an ornamental (CNAP 2000)



**Current distribution in Colorado:** Bouncingbet is increasingly common in Colorado, particularly in residential areas and local open spaces where it has escaped cultivation as an ornamental species (CNAP 2000).

### **Biology**

**Seasonal development:** Flowering begins in July and continues until September (CNAP 2000).

### **Reproduction**

**Most commonly reproduces by:** Reproduces by seed and spreads clonally by rhizomes (CNAP 2000).

**Numbers of seeds/plant:** No information available

### **Description**

**Roots:** Rhizomatous root system

**Stems:** Mature plants are up to three feet tall with stout, erect, smooth, branching stems (CNAP 2000).

**Leaves:** Leaves are opposite, smooth, narrow, 2-4 inches long and have three distinct veins from the base (CNAP 2000).

**Flowers:** The flowers are crowded at the ends of branches, and have five petals that are generally pink and slightly notched at the apex (CNAP 2000).

**Fruits & seeds:** Fruits are many-seeded capsules. Seeds are dull-black and roundish or kidney-shaped (CNAP 2000).

## Value & Uses

Wood products: No information available

Importance to/impact on livestock & wildlife

Palatability: Poisonous, but rarely grazed (Whitson et al. 2000)

Nutritional value: No information available

Cover value: No information available

Value for rehabilitation of disturbed sites: No information available

Other uses & values: Bouncingbet was originally introduced from Europe as a garden ornamental and for its saponins, which are the source of its soap-producing qualities (Lokker and Cavers 1995).

## Infestations

Habitat: Bouncingbet is often found in large dense patches on hillsides, along river courses, roadsides, meadows, and waste areas. It prefers moist, well-drained soil, and full sun to partial shade and is currently found primarily in municipal areas and nearby wildlands (CNAP 2000).

Impacts/Threats:

Special Challenges to Management: Bouncingbet is not yet widespread in Colorado, so the most important control is to be on the lookout for it and prevent new infestations. If infestations are discovered, they should be controlled immediately, and all seed production prevented. Since bouncingbet usually grows in dense patches it is relatively easy to spot and treat. Be aware that this species is often found in wet areas, which may restrict the use of certain pesticides. As with all perennial weeds that have extensive root systems, the key to controlling bouncingbet is to eliminate seed production while depleting the nutrient reserves in the roots (CNAP 2000).

## Control Methods

### Physical

**Manual:** Pulling several times a year can control bouncingbet. Pulling should be conducted after the plants have bolted but before seed production and should be repeated on any late or re-emerging or new shoots from the root system (CNAP 2000).

**Mechanical:**

Cultivation: No information available.

Mowing: Bouncingbet can be controlled by mowing several times a year. Mowing should be conducted after the plants have bolted but before seed production and should be repeated on any re-emerging shoots from the root system (CNAP 2000).

**Cultural:** Prevent the establishment of new infestations by minimizing disturbance and seed dispersal, eliminating seed production and maintaining healthy native communities (CNAP 2000).

**Biological:**

Insects: None known.

Pathogens: None known.

## Chemical

Conventional: Research needed

Trade Name (common name)	Active ingredient/Acre (Product/Acre)	Remarks
Oust Extra (sulfometuron + metsulfu- ron)	2 2/3 to 3.0 oz	Apply prior to, or shortly after emergence

Organic: Research needed

**USE PESTICIDES WISELY:** Always read the entire pesticide label carefully, follow all mixing and application instructions and wear all recommended personal protective gear and clothing.

**NOTICE:** Mention of pesticide products in this profile does not constitute endorsement of any material.

### Additional comments:

### Contacts:

### Links:

Colorado Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Plant Industry

<http://www.ag.state.co.us/DPI/weeds/Weed.html>

Colorado Weed Management Association

<http://www.cwma.org>

Colorado Weed Management Guide

<http://www.cepep.colostate.edu/WeedGuide/Weed Guide 2004.pdf>

### References:

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Colorado Natural Areas Program. 2000. Creating an Integrated Weed Management Plan: A Handbook for Owners and Managers of Lands with Natural Values. Colorado Natural Areas Program, Colorado State Parks, Colorado Department of Natural Resources; and Division of Plant Industry, Colorado Department of Agriculture. Denver, CO. pp 195-196.  
[http://parks.state.co.us/cnap/IWM\\_handbook/IWM\\_index.htm](http://parks.state.co.us/cnap/IWM_handbook/IWM_index.htm)

Lokker, C. and P.B. Cavers. The effects of physical damage on seed production in flowering plants of *Saponaria officinalis*. Canadian Journal of Botany 73:235-243.

Stubbendieck, J., G.Y. Friisoe, M.R. Bolick. 1995. Weeds of Nebraska and the Great Plains. Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Lincoln, NE. pp 244-245.

USDA, NRCS. 2002. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.5 (<http://plants.usda.gov>). [National Plant Data Center](#), Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

Whitson, T.D.(ed.), L.C. Burrill, S.A. Dewey, D.W. Cudney, B.E. Nelson, R.D. Lee, R. Parker. 2000. Bouncingbet. *Weeds of the West*. Western Society of Weed Science, in cooperation with the Western United States Land Grant Universities Cooperative Extension Services and the University of Wyoming. pp. 250-250.

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