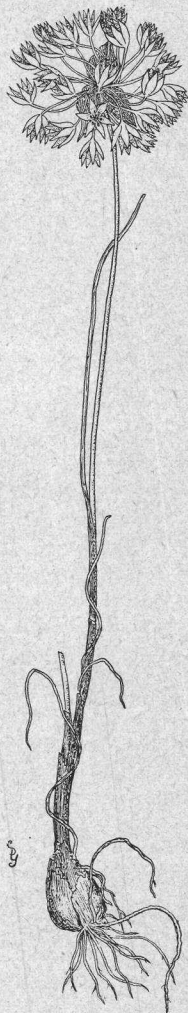


Wild Onion

LAWRENCE JENKINS

E. R. JACKMAN



WILD ONION — *Allium ampletens* —
Showing entire plant.

Oregon State System of Higher Education
Federal Cooperative Extension Service
Oregon State College
Corvallis

Wild Onion

(*Allium amplexans*)

By LAWRENCE JENKINS and E. R. JACKMAN*

Illustrations by Cathrine Davis Young

Wild onion is a persistent perennial that reproduces from bulbs and seed. The bulbs do not divide to form new plants as is the case with wild garlic. Other kinds of wild onion occur in rocky, shallow soils, especially in eastern Oregon, and are somewhat useful as forage plants in the early spring. The species described here is occasionally found in grain fields, pastures, and meadows. It commonly grows from 6 to 18 inches tall. Compact flowerheads are produced, one at the tip of each slender stem. Flowers are pale pink, and flower clusters are from 1 to 1½ inches across. From 20 to 30 flowers are borne in the cluster on individual fine stems about ½ inch long. Several long, slender, grasslike leaves are produced. They branch from a papery sheath enclosing the stem that arises from the bulb and extends a few inches above ground. Leaves appear very early in the spring and are generally mature when the plant flowers. Mature leaves are brown, rolled, and withered to about the diameter of string.

There is one bulb to the plant, from ¼ to ⅝ inch in diameter, fleshy, and covered with a purplish or reddish coat. Seeds are black, from ⅓ to ⅕ inch across and often five-sided, somewhat resembling buckwheat. The entire plant has a distinct onionlike odor. If milk-producing animals eat this weed, the milk and butter become tainted. Losses due to low-scoring butter because of this weed are frequent in some counties.

Control. The persistent fleshy bulb makes eradication of this weed difficult. The only method practicable on large areas is cultivation, thereby causing a continued drain on the food reserve in the bulb until it is exhausted. An annual hay crop such as oats and vetch may be planted in the fall at a heavy rate and harvested earlier than is normal for hay. Immediately after harvesting, the area should be plowed and summer-fallowed the balance of the season. It will usually take at least 2 years to control the pest with this method. Occasional cultivations will only spread the bulbs, and, therefore, areas infested with this weed should not be plowed or otherwise worked through unless systematic cultivation is carried to completion. Small areas can be treated with sodium chlorate or carbon bisulphide.

Discussion on the use of these chemicals and other methods of controlling perennial weeds will be found in Extension Bulletin 510.

This is one of a series of 39 bulletins discussing 58 perennial weeds in Oregon and their control. A list of bulletins in this series will be found on the last page of Extension Bulletin 510. The individual bulletins are punched so that several may be bound together if desired.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The authors thank Dr. Helen M. Gilkey, Curator of the Herbarium, for reading the manuscript and checking the description of the plant. Professor G. R. Hyslop, In Charge, Division of Plant Industries, made many helpful suggestions.

* E. R. Jackman is Extension Specialist in Farm Crops and Lawrence Jenkins is Assistant Extension Specialist in Farm Crops at Oregon State College.

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics
Wm. A. Schoenfeld, Director

Oregon State College and United States Department of Agriculture, Cooperating
Printed and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914