

Bitter sneezeweed

Helenium amarum

Description

Toxic to mammals and insects due to the presence of lactone tenulin.

Habit

Perennial herb from a fibrous root; stems erect, solitary or few; sometimes branched at the base, branched above, minutely hairy with upwardly-curved hairs or nearly glabrous, 0.15-1.2 m tall.

Leaves

Basal leaves soon deciduous, stem leaves alternate, numerous, glandular-dotted, usually wing-margined at the base, lanceolate, narrowing to an unstalked or almost unstalked base, shallowly toothed or nearly entire, 3-15 cm long, 5-40 mm wide.

Stems

Winged.

Flowers





Heads with ray and disk flowers, several to numerous, terminal, involucre are 6-8 mm tall, involucre bracts are narrow, 10-20 ray flowers, yellow in color, 3-lobed, 1-2.5 cm long.

Fruits and Seeds

Achenes angled, appressed stiff-hairy on the angles, pappus of egg-shaped or lanceolate, long-pointed scales; broadened at the base, about 1/2 the length of the disk flowers.

Habitat

Found in stream banks and other moist, low ground in the valleys and foothills.

Reproduction

By seed.

Similar

Purple-head sneezeweed (*Helenium flexuosum*) and Common sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Effectively controlled by any of the several readily available general use herbicides before the plant flowers.

Credits

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