

Grecian foxglove

Digitalis lanata

Description

Introduced to North America as an ornamental. Toxic to humans and wildlife due to the presence of cardiac glycosides.

Habit

Biennial or short-lived perennial that forms a rosette its first year, then bolts and sends up a single flowering stem in its second and subsequent years.

Leaves

Basal leaves grow up to 6 in. long and 2 in. across; lanceolate, oblanceolate or elliptic in shape and glabrous. Alternate leaves are lanceolate-oblong in shape, smooth along the margins, and sessile. Both sides are dull green and glabrous.





Stems

Flowering stems are unbranched and grow 2-5 ft. tall. Stalk is light green, yellowish green, or purple, terete, and glabrous. Sometimes covered with purple or brown dots.

Flowers

Creamy white to pale yellow with brownish-purple veins inside. Densely arranged and oriented in the same direction. 1.25-2 in. long and consists of a tubular corolla with 5 lobes, the bottom lobe being much larger (0.5-0.75 in. long). Exterior is finely pubescent.

Fruits and Seeds

Flowers are replaced by ovoid seed capsules that are 0.50 in. long, green in color and hairy. Each capsule contains numerous seeds.

Habitat

Native to central and southern Europe. Can be found in abandoned homesteads, roadsides, railroads, weedy meadows, open woodlands, and areas near organic refuse dumps.

Reproduction

Reproduces only by seed.

Similar

Purple foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) and Yellow foxglove (*Digitalis lutea*); can be easily distinguished by the color of their flowers.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Hand pulling is not recommended due to exposure to toxins in plant. Repeated hand pulling, using protective gloves, in the spring can control very small populations. Frequent mowing during the growing season and the use of general use herbicides can be effective.

Credits

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