

Wall Lettuce

Mycelis muralis (L.) Dumort

Synonyms

Lactuca muralis (L.) Fresen.

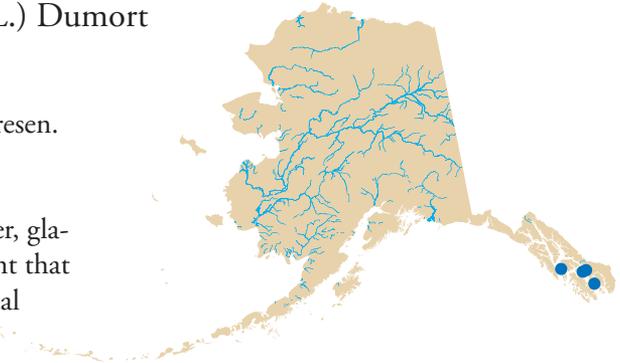
Description

Wall lettuce is a slender, glabrous, herbaceous plant that can behave as an annual plant on frequently disturbed substrates

or as a biennial on more stable substrates. Stems are erect, 2–3 feet tall, and branched above and may arise singly or multiply from a fibrous root. The stem surface is glabrous and often glaucous, and it exudes milky juice when broken. Basal and lower stem leaves are 2½–7 inches long, 1–3 inches wide, glabrous and pinnatifid, with broad, terminal segments and earlike, clasping projections at the leaf base. There are few middle and upper stem leaves, and they are reduced in size. Each flowerhead is comprised of 5 yellow, strap-shaped ray florets. Achenes are approximately ⅛ of an inch long, several-nerved, and black or brown with white pappus. The plant dies back after flowering but produces an overwintering rosette.

Similar Species

Three other lettuce species—prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola* L.), included in this book), tall blue lettuce (*L. biennis* (Moench) Fernald), and blue lettuce (*L. tatarica* C.A. Mey.)—are known to occur in Alaska. Prickly lettuce has yellow ray florets like wall lettuce, but they consist of 5–12



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florets and the leaves are prickly. Tall blue lettuce and blue lettuce can be easily distinguished from both species by their bluish to white flowers.

Management

Control options have not been investigated. Wall lettuce may be susceptible to grazing. Kellman (1974) suggested that wall lettuce will not persist on sites with established perennials.

Notes

The raw leaves of wall lettuce are edible and used in salads. It is native to the Mediterranean and western Asia.



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The stem leaves of wall lettuce.