

juice, and calling George's attention to them. We dismissed them as young Blue Lettuce, never asking ourselves just what Blue Lettuce would be doing on shale badlands. I'm sure now that these were *Stephanomeria*.

The following table will help to distinguish *Stephanomeria* from the two Saskatchewan skeleton-weeds, in case anyone is interested in finding it in their areas. Dr. G. W. Argus of the Fraser Herbarium (described in the June, 1964, issue of the *Blue Jay*) would be pleased to receive specimens. Going by geology it should occur southeast of Val Marie along the Frenchman River, and perhaps along Battle Creek near Merryflat, as well as at Morgan Creek. In fact, George

Ledingham collected it along the Frenchman on June 28, 1964—a few weeks after our discovery at Beechy (see photo).

The flowers are not mentioned in the table. All three species have similar thin-cylindric flower heads which have about five pink rays roughly one-half inch long.

LITERATURE CITED

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SEPARATION OF SKELETON-WEEDS

Names	<i>Lygodesmia juncea</i> Purple Skeleton-weed	<i>Lygodesmia rostrata</i> Annual Skeleton-weed	<i>Stephanomeria runcinata</i> (Rush Pink)
Leaves	Linear and entire, often reduced to scales or lacking.	Linear and entire, well-developed.	Pinnatifid to merely toothed, well-developed.
Roots	Perennial from deep running rhizomes (root-stocks).	Annual from a tap-root.	Authorities state a caudex (woody tap-root) to be present; our material, however, has well-developed creeping rhizomes.
Milky juice	Yellow-green, a fact not mentioned in floras.	White.	White.
Pappus (seed cotton)	Simple (hairs unbranched) pale brown.	Simple, white.	Plumose (hairs with featherlike branching), white.
Distribution	Dry places throughout prairie Saskatchewan.	Southwest only, open sand.	Southwest only, powder shale badlands.

Additional Notes on Common Mullein at Saskatoon in 1964

by William S. Richards, Saskatoon



Common Mullein, Saskatoon, 1964

Since the first report of Common Mullein, *Verbascum thapsus* L. in Saskatchewan by J. H. Hudson (*Blue Jay*, March, 1962) there has been a further report of this plant occurring at Moose Jaw by Mrs. MacGillivray (*Blue Jay*, June, 1962). The accompanying photo shows a flowering specimen growing at Saskatoon in September, 1964.

During the summer of 1963 I revisited the site where I first found this plant growing, and although I thought I had made a thorough search of the area, I was unable to locate any first year rosettes or second year spike-heads. However, in 1964 I returned

once again to check the same place and was surprised to find a healthy looking specimen with a flowering stem developing. Apparently I must have missed the first year rosette in 1963. This specimen during the season grew to a height of about four feet.

Common Mullein, according to the reference books at the local library, has a number of other common names which include: Velvet Dock, Aaron's Rod, Adam's Flannel, Flannel Leaf, Blanket Leaf, Candle Leaf, Velvet Plant, Feltwort, Wild Tobacco, and Devil's Tobacco. In the book "Stalking the Wild Asparagus" (Gibbons, 1962), under a chapter dealing with folk medicine, it is mentioned as an ingredient of a cough syrup. Along

with mullein, the concoction included white spruce, wild cherry and red clover. In Europe during the Middle Ages part of this plant was used in the making of candlewicks which probably accounts for one of its common names, Candle Leaf.

This location in the C.N.R. yards at Saskatoon is to be redeveloped into an industrial park and it is quite likely that bulldozers and other earth-moving machinery will be working in this area in the near future. I consider it unlikely that this plant will survive here. With this in mind I collected the specimen and delivered it to Dr. George W. Argus, W. P. Fraser Herbarium, University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon.

Bluebur – A Weedy Pest

by **Keith F. Best**, Swift Current

Bluebur (*Lappula enchinata*) (Gilib.), also called stickseed, burseed and sticktight, is so named because of the burlike nutlets which cling to clothing and to the fur of animals. This plant is a member of the borage family (Boraginaceae) and derives its name *Lappula*, meaning little bur, from the Latin *lappa*, a bur. Introduced from Europe, Bluebur is now widely distributed in the West, but is usually only abundant in waste places such as roadsides and fencelines. Bluebur is frequently a pest in fields and pastures, often increasing on overgrazed range. The seeds which cling tightly to clothing and become entangled in the manes and tails of cattle and horses, as well as in the wool of sheep, are annoying to both man and beast.

A much-branched hairy annual or winter annual, bluebur grows from six inches to two feet in height. The alternate, narrow leaves are one to three inches long, the upper ones being stalkless, the lower ones generally stalked. The pale blue flowers are about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch across and are found in erect racemes at the ends of the branches. The fruit consists of four nutlets with two rows of hooked prickles around the margins. The whole plant has a rather unpleasant smell like that of a mouse-infested building.

Bluebur is practically worthless as forage for cattle and horses and rates only as poor to fair for sheep.



Drawing by K. F. Best

Bluebur—*Lappula enchinata*