

# STEVE'S Weed of the Month

## Common Fiddleneck

**Also Known As:** coast fiddleneck, Menzies fiddleneck, small-flowered fiddleneck, tarweed.

**Common Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia micrantha* Suksd.)** (*A. calycina*, *A. intermedia*, *A. menziesii*) belongs to the borage family (Boraginaceae). Common fiddleneck is a native of North America where it flourishes in disturbed areas on roadsides, neglected fields and on poor grade pasture. Common fiddleneck is considered an indicator species of disturbed light soils. This plant can become invasive in abandoned crop land, land in CRP and neglected pastures.



### Biology

Common fiddleneck is seen in flower from May to July and flowering may continue into September. The flowers are self fertile and usually self-pollinated. Each flower produces 4 seeds loosely enclosed in an expanded bristly calyx. The flower spike is compact initially but it elongates as the



flowers develop and becomes crosier-like, hence the name fiddleneck. New flowers develop at the apex of the flowerspike as the older flowers mature. The seeds in the lower flowers ripen and the hard black seeds loosen and fall out when mature. The nutlets of at least some species are reputedly poisonous.

## Persistence and Spread

There is no obvious dispersal mechanism but the seeds, still enclosed in the bristly calyx, are often dispersed on the fur of animals. Common fiddleneck seed has been introduced to new areas contained in sandy soil brought in from elsewhere. Where this has occurred, seedling emergence has continued intermittently for several years.

## Management

Very little information has been found, specifically for the control of common fiddleneck. It should therefore be managed as any other annual weed would be, by shallow cultivations to kill emerged seedlings and prevent seeding.

**Chemical:** Several herbicides can be used in cropping and non-cropping systems.

**More information can be found in the  
[PNW Weed Management Handbook](#)**

**Use pesticides with care.** Apply them only to plants, animals, or sites listed on the label. When mixing and applying pesticides, follow all label precautions to protect yourself and others around you. It is a violation of the law to disregard label directions. Store pesticides in their original containers and keep them out of the reach of children, pets, and livestock.

**Biological:** Sheep will readily feed on common fiddleneck depending on stage of development. Cattle have grazed heavily on common fiddleneck when abundant grasses and forbs have been available (Steve Van Vleet, Personal observations and documentation)

**Questions:** contact [Steve Van Vleet](#) or phone (509) 397 - 6290