

Nettle-leaved Giant Hyssop (*Agastache urticifolia*)

Lamiaceae (Mint Family)

Status: Blue / Not Assessed

Best Survey Time: Jul to Aug

General Habitat: Upland

RANGE

- Found in North America from southern British Columbia to the interior northwest United States
- In southern B.C., from the South Okanagan (Okanagan Falls to Osoyoos) east to the West Kootenays, mostly scattered along Highway 3

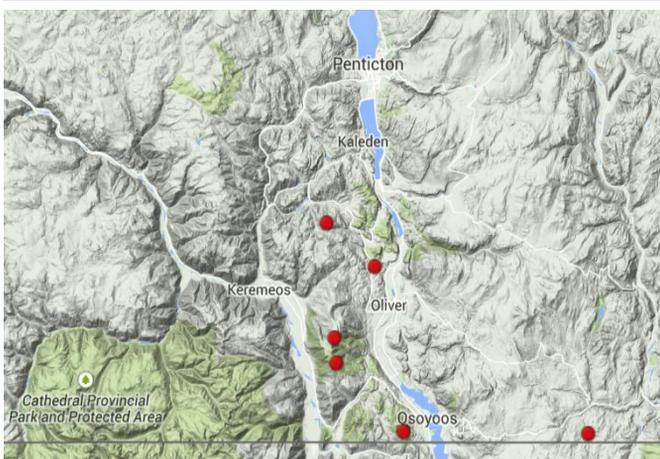


Figure 1 Thompson Okanagan Region distribution of *Agastache urticifolia* (BC CDC 2014)

HABITAT

- Roadsides, fencerows and cliff bases in the upper sagebrush steppe of the Interior Douglas Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone
- Favours microsites that hold seasonal moisture longer than in the neighbouring habitat
- Associates include sagebrush (*Artemisia* spp.), Rocky Mountain Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), bunchgrasses, prairie sagewort (*A. frigida*) and long-leaved phlox (*Phlox longifolia*)



Figure 2 Sagebrush habitat and cliff bases along Mount Kobau access road, southwest of Oliver, B.C.



Figure 3 Plants growing in a dry site in July that contained early season moisture

LIFE HISTORY

- Perennial species that blooms in July and August
- Flowers are pollinated by a variety of flying insects, especially bees
- Plants die back at the end of the growing season and resprout from a woody stem base in the spring
- Reproduction is primarily through short-distance dispersal of nutlets (dry fruit segments containing single seeds)

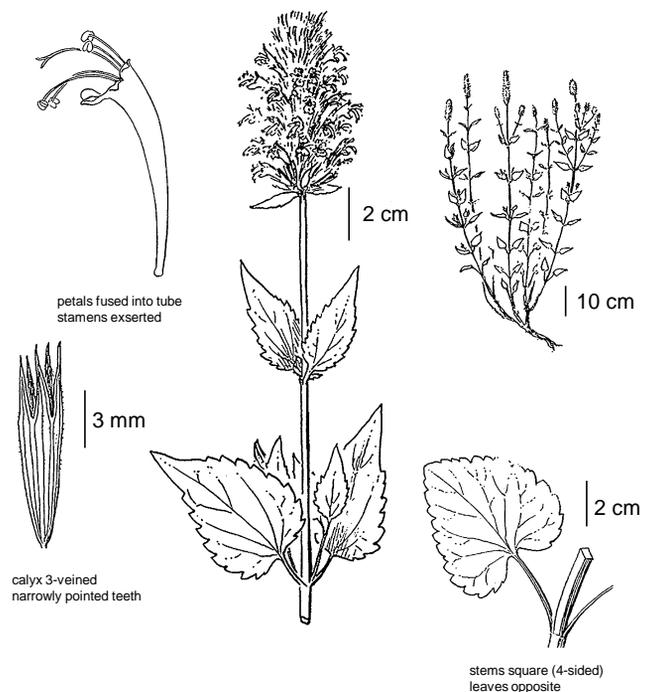


Figure 4 Illustration of *Agastache urticifolia* by Jeanne R. Janish (Hitchcock et al. 1969)

Agastache urticifolia (continued)

DESCRIPTION

General

- Tall perennial, growing from a woody root-crown and somewhat shrubby in appearance, up to 150 cm tall
- Stems four-sided (characteristic of Lamiaceae) and hairless or finely hairy

Leaves

- Leaves opposite, triangular to heart-shaped, 4 to 8 cm wide, largest leaves about 10 cm long, with prominently toothed margin
- Usually short hairy, and on short stalks

Flowers

- Numerous pink or lavender flowers clustered in terminal spikes, 3 to 15 cm long
- Petals fused, pink to lavender, 10 to 14 mm long
- Calyx (sepals) pink to mauve, 3-veined with triangular-pointed teeth
- Stamens exserted, four in total, in two pairs

Fruits

- Four, rectangular nutlets about 2 mm long
- Nutlets brown with small hairs at tip



Figure 5 Close-up of terminal spike showing white petals, mauve calyces, and exserted stamens

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- Characterized by its square stems, robust nature, long terminal spikes, and exserted stamens
- Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*), a weedy species occurring throughout the Okanagan, looks very similar but has its familiar musky scent
- Catnip is distinguished by usually hairier (hence greyer) leaves and flowers that lack protruding stamens

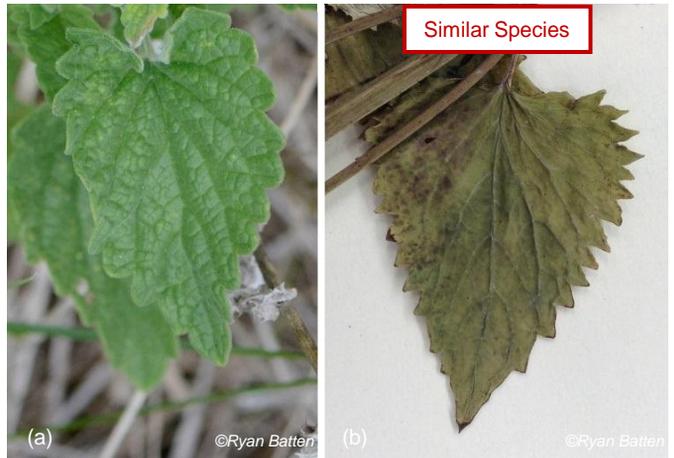


Figure 6 Comparison of (a) *Agastache urticifolia* and (b) *Nepeta cataria* leaves, the latter of which are generally hairier and greyer

GENERAL THREATS AND GUIDANCE

- **Avoid development in areas with known occurrences of *Agastache urticifolia* through project relocation or redesign**
- Protect upland sagebrush habitats from disturbance and development (including overgrazing by cattle) and monitor the effects of climate change and succession on the availability of suitable sagebrush habitat
- Follow provincial methods for when and how to conduct plant species at risk surveys
- Follow provincial policy and guidance on how to avoid, minimize, restore and offset impacts to plant species at risk and their habitats
- Report any sightings to the B.C. Conservation Data Centre (cdccdata@gov.bc.ca) and FLNR Ecosystems Section (josie.symonds@gov.bc.ca)

REFERENCES

- B.C. Conservation Data Centre. 2014. <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>
- Douglas et al. (editors). 1999. *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia*. Vol. 3. B.C. Min. Environ., Lands and Parks, and Min. For., Victoria, B.C.
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