



© Carol Witham

common name	Hawkbit
scientific name	<i>Leontodon taraxacoides</i>
family	Asteraceae (sunflower)
habitat	vernal pools, wetlands
size	plant 8 to 10 inches tall; flower 20 to 40 mm across
fun facts	The genus name (<i>Leontodon</i>) means "lion tooth". This plant is not native.

description Member of the sunflower family. Each **flowerhead** is actually made up of 5-50 individual yellow flowers. In Hawkbit, all of the flowers making up the flowerhead are ray flowers. The center ones just have shorter petals than the outer ones.

The flowers of Hawkbit look-like those of the common Dandelion which may grow in your yard. The leaves of Hawkbit are in a **basal rosette** (arranged at the base of the stem) and the flowers are borne on 8-10 inch tall, leafless stems. If you look at the leaves with your hand lens, you will see that the hairs on the leaves are forked at the tip like a snake's tongue.

life cycle Hawkbit can be an annual, biennial (living for two years), or a perennial depending upon the habitat. At Mather Field they are probably annuals. They germinate after the pool water has begun to evaporate. They bloom in late May after the Goldfields and other native sunflowers have set seed.

ecology Hawkbit is one of the few non-native species which can colonize vernal pools. At Mather Field it is particularly **abundant** on the lower terrace. Hawkbit was introduced to California from Europe.