

Dipsacaceae

teasel family

The teasel family consists of 11 genera of 350 herbs and shrubs found in temperate climates. Containing both perennials and biennials native to Europe, Asia and Africa, a single species has been introduced to Nova Scotia. Leaves are generally opposite or whorled. The flowers are borne in dense cymelike heads. Flowers are sympetalous and mostly perfect, the corolla 4–5-merous. It appears to be bilabiate. Stamens number four. Calyx is deeply cleft into 4–5 lobes. Ovary is inferior in position and contains a single locule. Dry fruit is enclosed by the persistent involucrel.

Succisa Haller

A mere three species comprise the genus, native to Africa and Europe. Capitulate inflorescences extend above the basal leaves on long peduncles. Flowers in the centre of the head differ in size from the outer ones. The calyx is a shallow cup of 4–5 bristles surrounding the four-lobed corolla. The four-angled involucrel encloses the fruit.

Succisa pratensis Moench

Devil's-bit; succise des prés

Peduncles and pairs of ovate leaves are densely pubescent. Leaves are smooth on the margins or coarsely and shallowly toothed and acute. Flowers are mauve to blue, borne in a capitulate inflorescence.

Flowers in August and September.

Found along roadsides, in fields and about houses.

Common around Louisbourg and in nearby communities.

In North America, known only from NS; QC to ON; MA and RI where it has been introduced from Eurasia.