Blue vervain, also called wild hyssop and purvain, is a perennial plant that reproduces by seed and short rootstocks (rhizomes).

Native to the United States, blue vervain is found throughout the Mississippi Valley and eastern states. The plant grows in pastures and meadows, along roadsides and fence rows, and in waste places. It is most commonly found on low, moist ground with gravelly or heavy loam soils.

Leaves (1) are opposite, 3 to 6 inches long. They are pointed, saw-toothed, rough textured, and prominently veined. Dark green above, leaves are a grayish-green below.

Blue vervain grows 2 to 4 feet tall. Upright stems are 4-sided and slightly hairy. Branches occur near the top of the plant (2).

Small, blue flowers appear in compact spikes that are 2 to 6 inches long. Flowers begin to bloom and mature from the base of the spike. They are less than ¼ inch across.

Reddish-brown seeds (3) are borne four in a pod. Seeds are about 3/32 in. long. They are oblong with an oval side and two flat sides, and have a white scar at the base. Oval seed surface is ridged.

Blue vervain is a shallow-rooted plant that becomes hard and coarse as it matures. Annual mowing will help to control the plant. Application of 2,4-D at 1 pound per acre will usually provide good control.

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