

Why is it a Noxious Weed?

Tansy ragwort is toxic and can be lethal to cattle and horses, and to a lesser extent goats, and seldom sheep. All plant parts are toxic and toxic properties remain in cut plants found in hay.

Tansy ragwort can also cause human liver damage, and should never be used as an herbal remedy or tea. It can also taint milk consumed by people, although it's unlikely to do so in toxic amounts. Also, honey containing nectar from tansy ragwort tastes so unpleasant it can't be sold.



Eric Coombs, Oregon Department of Agriculture, bugwood.org

UGA0023035

Noxious Weeds in Washington

“Noxious weed” means a plant that when established is highly destructive, competitive, or difficult to control by cultural or chemical practices. RCW 17.10.10

Noxious weeds reduce crop yields, destroy native plant and animal habitat, damage recreational opportunities, clog waterways, lower land values, and poison or harm people and livestock.

Tansy ragwort is a Class B noxious weed in Washington State. Check with your local county noxious weed control board or go to our website to find out if control is required where you live.

Contact Us

If you have questions about tansy ragwort control, identification or about other noxious weeds, we can help. Please contact us at:

WA State Noxious Weed Control Board
P.O. Box 42560
Olympia, WA 98504
360-725-5764
<http://www.nwcb.wa.gov>

Or contact your local county noxious weed control board:

For information on biological control of tansy ragwort, contact:

WSU Integrated Weed Control Project
WSU Extension
2606 W Pioneer
Puyallup WA 98371
253-445-4657
<http://invasives.wsu.edu>



Tansy Ragwort

Senecio jacobaea

A Toxic, Noxious Weed In Washington

Identification

Tansy ragwort is a tap-rooted, biennial or perennial plant that is native to Eurasia. Young tansy ragwort plants form a rosette of coarse, ruffled leaves with reddish stems. Plants will grow one or more upright, leafy stems, 1 to 4 feet tall, the following year.

- Leaves are twice divided, deeply lobed and alternately arranged on the stems.
- Flowerheads are in flat-topped clusters. Each flowerhead is daisy-like in appearance and is a cluster of many small yellow flowers. The petals (ray flowers) generally number 13.
- At the base of the flowerheads there are generally 13 green bracts with dark tips.



The young rosettes of tansy ragwort plants can be especially dangerous to grazing animals because they are hard to avoid as animals eat grass growing next to them.

Where does it grow?

Tansy ragwort often grows where land has been disturbed, and where grass and other plants are sparse. It is commonly found on roadsides, in pastures, fields and cleared forested areas. It is not particular to soil type.

It can be found growing throughout Washington but is more commonly found on the west side of the state.

Control

Tansy ragwort control is best done before the plant begins to flower to prevent possible seed development. Plants have viable seed as soon as it begins to flower. Small infestations can be controlled manually by pulling up the entire plant, including its roots. If you pull flowering plants, seal them in a plastic bag and put them in the trash—not in your compost or yard waste. Large infestations are better handled by a combination of manual and chemical controls. **After tansy ragwort control, plant areas with site appropriate plants to provide competition and reduce further tansy ragwort invasion. Monitor areas for seedlings and resprouts.**

Mechanical: Mowing is not effective, and tansy ragwort can re-sprout if the entire plant is not removed. Mowed stems will send up multiple stems and flower at shorter height. Mowing can be used as an interim measure to keep it from blooming and going to seed but other control methods will be needed the same year before flowers form. Mowed or injured plants will also behave as perennials and will grow new stems the following year. Dig up or pull the entire plant when the soil is moist to help remove the whole root—root fragments left in the soil can re-sprout.

Chemical: Herbicides are effective against tansy ragwort when applied to rosettes in the spring, or applied to the new growth initiated after fall rains. Remove and bag plants that have already gone to seed as herbicide will not stop seed production. Animals should be removed from areas that have been sprayed for at least 4 to 6 weeks. Always read the label instructions before applying any herbicides for proper rate and timing. Use chemicals that are compatible with your goals. Check with your local county noxious weed board for specific herbicide recommendations.

Biological: The ragwort flea beetle (*Longitarsus jacobaeae*), the ragwort seed fly (*Botanophila seneciella*) and the cinnabar moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*) are biological agents used to control large populations of tansy ragwort. Other control treatments should not be applied where insect agents are active. Contact the WSU Integrated Weed Control Project or your local county noxious weed board for further information.



Adult ragwort seed fly on tansy ragwort seedhead.



Blooming tansy ragwort with its characteristically leafy stems.