



Control Options for Common Cat's-ear

General information: Common cat's-ear, also called false dandelion due to its yellow dandelion-like flower, can be found in lawns, yards, roadsides, pastures and waste areas. This plant tolerates a wide range of soil and environmental conditions, and can live up to 10 years. Common cat's-ear can produce over 2000 seeds per plant, however seeds do not persist long in the soil. Seeds are produced in a dandelion-like puffball, and are dispersed by wind and by clinging to animals. Common cat's-ear can be a problem in lawns, as the basal leaves lay flat on the ground and are usually missed by mowing. Additionally, the plant quickly re-flowers, if flowers are mowed. Control efforts for cat's-ear are best initiated before the plants flower. If it is budding or flowering, the flower heads must be destroyed to prevent seed formation. If the buds/flowers are left on the plants, the plants will still produce seed, despite being uprooted or sprayed. Do not compost buds or flowers. Encouraging grass growth through the use of applied fertilizers and/or rotational grazing will help prevent the reestablishment of weed species.



Manual/Mechanical Techniques: Cat's-ear can be controlled through hand digging, taking care to remove as much as the root system as possible. Cultivation can be used to control cat's-ear, but must be done for at least 2 consecutive years.

Chemical Recommendations: Cat's-ear can be controlled using specific herbicides. Plants should be sprayed in before flower buds appear to ensure seed is not produced. Spraying can also be done in the fall, to target rosettes that will overwinter. When using herbicides, always read and follow label directions for rates, spraying conditions, personal protective equipment and grazing intervals. Do not spray when it is windy or raining or when rain is forecast. Do not mow sprayed plants for at least 2 weeks after herbicide application. For most infestations, plants should be treated individually (spot-sprayed). Spray plants until they are just wet. Herbicides should not be sprayed within 60 feet of water bodies and creeks, without further consultation with the Noxious Weed Board. Remember, it is the herbicide applicators responsibility to apply the product in accordance to the instructions on the label.

For chemically treating catsear, the Whatcom County Noxious Weed Board recommends using a selective broadleaf herbicide containing the active ingredient 2,4-D (available under a wide range of brand names). Glyphosate (the active chemical in herbicides such as Roundup®) is generally not recommended, as it will kill any vegetation it hits, including surrounding grass. Maintaining the grass will assist in weed control efforts by shading any weed seeds in the soil, making it more difficult for seeds to germinate.

- **Always read and understand the label of the herbicides you choose to use.**
- **More is NOT better when using herbicides, and may actually hinder the ability of the herbicide to injure the entire target plant, including the roots, if the solution is too strong. This wastes money and effort and puts more product into the environment than is necessary. ALWAYS follow the recommended rates on the label.**
- **With all herbicides, when you apply them is as important as how you apply them.**

The mention of a specific product brand name in this document is not, and should not be construed as an endorsement or as a recommendation for the use of that product. Chemical control options may differ for private, commercial and government agency users. Herbicide information is taken from the WSU Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook 2010.