



Control Options for St. Johnswort

General Information

St. Johnswort, a plant native to Europe which became established in western North America around the turn of the century, can spread rapidly, invading pastures, roadsides and other disturbed areas. The seeds have a gelatinous coating that allows them to adhere to objects when the seeds are wet, and fall off the object when the seeds dry. This allows the seeds to be easily dispersed by passing animals, people and vehicles. St. Johnswort can also spread by underground and aboveground creeping stems. Eating St. Johnswort causes light-skinned animals to become overly sensitive to sunlight, causing dermatological problems, including blistering of the skin and hair loss. In severe cases of poisoning, symptoms may include convulsions, staggering and coma. Although fresh plants cause more severe reactions, dried St. Johnswort can also cause these problems, and livestock cannot easily avoid eating the plant if it is contaminating hay.



Manual/Mechanical Techniques

Seedlings and small infestations can be dug by hand, although care must be taken to dispose of the plants so they cannot resprout. As much of the root system should be removed as possible, as lateral roots can give rise to new plants. The area should be rechecked periodically to find any possible regrowth. Mowing, if done throughout the season, can prevent seed formation. Some plant mortality may occur if mowing is done frequently (weekly or biweekly) over at least one season.

Chemical Recommendations

St. Johnswort can be managed using specific herbicides. 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. 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.

St. Johnswort can be controlled using an herbicide containing *2,4-D* (found in many broad-leaf herbicides). Foliar applications should be made when plants are actively growing and before flowering. Pay careful attention to label instructions and follow directions closely.

NEVER apply herbicides to standing water unless they are distinctly labeled for aquatic use. Ingredients in these products may be toxic to fish.

- **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 target plant 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. Herbicide information is taken from the WSU Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook and King County Noxious Weed Program.