

Common Tansy

Tanacetum vulgare



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Plant Family: Sunflower (Asteraceae)

Other Names: Golden buttons, bitter buttons, garden tansy

Similar Species: Tansy ragwort

Weed Classification: Priority 2B

Native to: Asia and Europe

Is This Weed Toxic? Yes, humans and livestock

Identification

Common tansy plants are sturdy, aromatic perennials with large fern-like foliage and attractive yellow button flowers. Each plant can reach up to 5 feet tall and produces many flowering heads made up of dense clusters of ¼" to ½" disk shaped flowers that bloom from July to September. The leaves lengthen throughout the season, reaching nearly a foot long at the peak of the season. The stems tend to be purplish-red, especially close to the ground, and are sometimes hairy. These weeds produce both by seed and rhizomes to form dense stands. Each plant can produce around 50,000 seeds in a season. Although generally found in moist areas, common tansy can grow along roadsides, trails, natural areas, pastures, forest areas, field margins, mining areas, and unmaintained gravel pits.

Treatment

Common tansy is relatively easy to find in the spring when the fern-like leaves begin to emerge in clusters. Monitor pastures, vacant land, and roadsides for new populations in April, June, and July. Dig up new or isolated weeds; if the colony is larger than can be removed or if it is unclear whether you've removed all of the roots, be sure to mark this area for herbicide application for either that fall or the following spring. Wash vehicles that may have come in contact with seeding plants to prevent dispersal across land and beyond.

Manual removal of this plant happens in the spring when the leaves begin to emerge. This plant is toxic so wear gloves when working it. Similar to dandelions, flowers can form into seeds even after they've been pulled so it is important to securely bag and dispose of all flowering plants. Be sure to remove as much of the root as possible since these plants spread by rhizomes, resulting in new plants sprouting the following season from any roots left behind.

Tillage can spread root fragments, although common tansy is generally not seen in crop fields.

Mowing alone will not control common tansy. This weed is capable of sprouting and flowering again in the same season once mowed, therefore it must be repeated regularly to eliminate regrowth. Do not mow plants that have already gone to seed.

Sheep and goats can be used to graze this plant without concern of poisoning.

Prescribed burning is not effective for reducing weed abundance since common tansy quickly sprouts from its roots after fire, although fire can be used to remove dead vegetation prior to an herbicide application.

For larger infestations herbicide use will likely be necessary. Application is most successful in the spring during active growth. Repeat applications for multiple years after the initial application will likely be required.

"Common Tansy." *Montana Weed Control Association*. MWCA, n.d. Web. 08 Mar. 2017.

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