

# St. Johnswort

*Hypericum perforatum*



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**Plant Family:** Clusiaceae

**Other Names:** Goatweed, klamath weed

**Similar Species:** Canary Island St. Johnswort, Dwarf St. Johnswort

**Weed Classification:** Priority 2B

**Native to:** Europe, Asia and North Africa

**Is This Weed Toxic?** Yes, to humans and livestock

## Identification

St. Johnswort, also known as goatweed, is an erect, multi-stemmed perennial that generally grows between 1 – 3 feet tall and has both runners and rhizomes. The flowers are bright yellow-orange, bordered by black speckles, and are complimented by very recognizable rounded leaves that when held up to the sun, have distinct pin-hole markings. The stems are woody and tend to be reddish in color. These plants reproduce sexually and asexually, and the flowers can self-pollinate, all factors that greatly enhance their success. Each plant can product between 15,000 – 30,000 seeds that according to some records can remain viable for a whopping 50+ years. Since these plants contain hypericin, ingestion by livestock, especially light skinned animals, can lead to the development of lesions and blisters, and delayed symptoms such as coma, convulsions and death.

## Treatment

Tillage can be effective when repeated in croplands, although regrowth can occur from root fragments.

Mowing is generally not considered feasible unless paired with an herbicide application. It can be used to prevent immediate seeding but will promote aggressive new vegetative growth.

Hand-pulling can be effective on small or new sites. Repeated pulls will be necessary to ensure that the entire plant and lateral root system have been removed. Bag and discard plants; do not leave them at the site.

Fire is NOT recommended because this plant responds to burning with aggressive growth from both established plants and new seeds, and will not damage the roots.

Grazing can cause toxicity issues with various lighter-skinned animals. It can still be utilized in an integrated plan if carefully managed. Overgrazing of grasses can happen quickly since this weed is not generally a desired forb by most grazers, allowing for greater opportunity of its expansion.

Herbicides are going to play a large role in an integrated plan. The type of herbicide will determine when to use it; using multiple herbicides with different modes of action will increase the success rate. Applications will need to be repeated.

Mangold, Jane, Roger Sheley, and Melissa Brown. "St. Johnswort: Identification, Biology, and Integrated Management." *MontGuide* (2009): n. pag. *Store.msuextension.org*. Montana State University. Web. 2 Feb. 2017.

"Common St. Johnswort." *Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board*. WA State NWCB, n.d. Web. 02 Feb. 2017

"St. John's Wort (*Hypericum Perforatum* L.)." *USDA NCRS Plant Guide* (2012): n. pag. *Plants. Usda.gov*. USDA. Web. 1 Feb. 2017.



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