



## ISLAND COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED PROGRAM WEED ALERT

*Senecio jacobaea*

### Tansy Ragwort

Sunflower Family

#### Class B Regulated Noxious Weed: Control Required

#### Identification Tips

Young plants have basal rosette of ruffled leaves  
Mature plants produce leafy flowering stalks,  
generally 2 to 4 feet tall  
Flowers are daisy-like with yellow petals and  
yellow center  
Leaves are dark green on top, whitish-green  
underneath, with deeply cut, blunt-toothed lobes  
with a ragged, ruffled appearance  
Often confused with common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), which has button-like flowers with no  
petals and flattened, fern-like leaves (See back)



Young tansy ragwort plants have basal rosette of ruffled leaves.

#### Biology

Generally biennial, with flowers in the second year  
Up to 150,000 seeds per plant; seeds spread by  
wind or mowing  
Seeds remain viable in the soil for over 10 years  
Flowers June to October, forming seeds in August



Tell-tale signs: leafy, flowering stalks,  
generally 2-4 feet tall.

#### Impacts

**Poisonous** to cattle, horses, sheep, pets and people;  
symptoms include swelling, inflammation of  
membranes, diarrhea, blood in feces, rough coat  
and excessive fluid in body  
Displaces quality forage plants due to its highly  
aggressive growth  
Liver damage possible due to bioaccumulation

#### Distribution

Found county-wide  
Likes full sun and open sites with moderately  
moist to dry soils  
Quickly invades newly disturbed areas, such as  
roadsides and heavily-grazed pastures

#### Questions:

Call Island County Noxious Weed  
Control Board 360-678-7992  
<http://ext100.wsu.edu/island/nrs/noxious/>

## What You Can Do

Help us stop the spread of this dangerous weed. Check your property and nearby roads regularly for flowering plants. By stopping seed production and eliminating existing plants, we can keep this toxic plant from harming animals. Contact the Noxious Weed Control Program if you see tansy ragwort on roads or neighboring properties, especially where there are horses or other animals grazing.

## Control Methods

If you find tansy ragwort on your property, choose one or a combination the control methods described below.

Most control methods need to be applied over several years to be successful.

**Prevention:** Watch for weeds in fill dirt, hay and seed from outside your area; clean vehicles and equipment regularly. Check for rosettes (young plants) in the spring.

**Manual:** Dig up the whole plant including roots; budding and flowering stems are easier to remove than rosettes. Flowers will go to seed after pulling, so bag and discard flower stalks.



Daisy-like flowers are found on tansy ragwort.

**Mechanical:** Tillage may be effective for large areas but may initially expose more seeds for germination. Mowing can stimulate crown growth and side roots. **Caution: plants will flower again after mowing.**

**Cultural:** Good pasture management keeps out unwanted plants. Re-seeding areas with fast-growing pasture grasses can establish competition and reduce tansy ragwort seed emergence.

**Chemical:** Herbicide treatments may help control large infestations. **Follow label application directions including grazing and environmental restrictions.** Good control is obtained by spraying rosettes in the spring and again in the fall with products that are systemic and selective so that they will not harm grasses. Selective herbicides that are effective include dicamba, 2,4-D and triclopyr. Glyphosate is non-selective but can be used where weeds are dense or where damage to grasses is minimal or will be re-seeded. Follow all regulations when applying herbicides near sensitive areas and their buffers. In some cases, this will require a permit or special license. Do not cut plants right before or after application in order to allow the systemic herbicide to take effect. Keep livestock away from sprayed plants for 1-2 weeks or as directed by the label, whichever is longer. Contact the Island County Noxious Weed Control Program for specific site and herbicide recommendations.



Common tansy is often mistaken for tansy ragwort, especially along roadsides.

Button-like flowers of the common tansy.



**Don't be Fooled:** Tansy ragwort is sometimes confused with common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*). Common tansy is a widespread noxious weed that often grows with tansy ragwort. Unlike tansy ragwort, livestock avoid this strong-smelling plant. Common tansy is easily identified by yellow, button-like flower heads without petals. Control is not required for common tansy, but it is recommended.