



Common Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)

AKA: Garden Tansy, Yellow Buttons

SK Provincial Designation: Noxious

Overview:

Common tansy is a perennial forb that reproduces by both seed and short rhizomes (underground horizontal roots). Introduced from Europe in the 1600's, its pungently aromatic foliage has been used medicinally, as an insect repellent, and for embalming.

Common tansy forms dense stands and the plants contain alkaloids that are toxic to both humans and livestock if consumed in large quantities. Cases of livestock poisoning are rare, though, because tansy is unpalatable to grazing animals.

Habitat:

It grows best in full sun and fertile, well-drained soil.



Identification:

Stems: Stems are branched, erect, often purplish-red, and dotted with glands. There are many stems per plant and grow up to 1.5 m tall.

Leaves: Leaves alternate on the stem and are deeply divided into numerous narrow, individual leaflets with toothed edges.

Flowers: Flowers are yellow, numerous, and button-like, occurring in dense, flat-topped clusters at the tops of the stems.

Seeds: Seeds are yellowish brown achenes with short, five-toothed crowns.

PHOTOS: TOP: Chet Neufeld
LEFT: Mary Ellen (Mel) Harte, Bugwood.org

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Common Tansy (continued)

Prevention:

Because of its long medicinal and horticultural use, Common Tansy is still available in plant nurseries and from herbal remedy suppliers. Gardeners should not purchase Common Tansy.

Control:

Grazing: Common Tansy is unpalatable to cattle and horses, but sheep and goats are reported to graze on it.

Cultivation: Since this plant is rhizomatous, flowering stems can regrow from severed roots, so cultivation is not a control option.

Mechanical: Regular mowing can reduce seed production but must be repeated to eliminate regrowth from root stock. The most effective control method combines mowing or hand cutting with chemical control and encouraging competition from native vegetation. Repeated stem removal depletes the food energy stored in roots.

Chemical:* Picloram, dicamba, Aminopyralid (alone in a product mix with 2,4-D), Chlorsulfuron (alone or in a product mix with Metsulfuron-methyl), Metsulfuron-methyl (alone or in a product mix with Aminopyralid) and Tribenuron-methyl are registered for use on Common Tansy. Glyphosate is also effective.

Biological: An agent search by CABI Switzerland was initiated in 2006. Since 2007, the Common Tansy Consortium has been funding research. The chemical variability of Common Tansy populations is being investigated with respect to host plant acceptance by biocontrol agent candidates. A literature review and field surveys have resulted in focus on five potential agents: the flower-feeding moth (*Isophrictis striatella*); the stem-mining weevil (*Microplontus millefollii*); the root-feeding beetle (*Longitarsus noricus*); the leaf-feeding beetle (*Cassida stigmatica*); and the stem-mining longhorn beetle (*Phytoecia nigricornis*).



PHOTOS: TOP: Chet Neufeld; BOTTOM: Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org
 REFERENCES: Alberta Invasive Species Council. 2014. Common Tansy *Tanacetum vulgare* Fact Sheet

*Always follow the product labels. Pesticides should only be applied by certified pesticide applicators. The use of pesticides in any manner not published on the label or registered under the *Minor Use of Pesticides* regulation constitutes an offence under both the *Federal Pest Control Products Act* and provincial acts in Saskatchewan. For the latest information on pesticides for agricultural use in Saskatchewan, please consult the provincial *Guide To Crop Protection*, produced annually by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture. Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 for more details.

