



Common Tansy

(Tanacetum vulgare)

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.

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



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: 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 re-grow from severed roots, therefore cultivation is not a control option.

Mechanical: Regular mowing can reduce



Above image courtesy Pennington County website (www.co.pennington.sd.us).

seed production but must be repeated to eliminate regrowth from rootstock. 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:¹ Picloram, dicamba and glyphosate can be effective on tansy when applied properly. Consult your local Agricultural Fieldman or Certified Pesticide Dispenser for more information.

Biological: None researched to date.



¹ Always follow the product labels. 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 *Alberta's Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*.