

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant, but may have limited distribution in some counties

Tansy ragwort
Senecio jacobaea

Other common names: Stinking willie, ragwort, tansy butterweed, stinking davy, sinking ninny, tansy ragweed

USDA symbol: SEJA
ODA rating: B and T



Introduction: *Senecio jacobaea* is native to Europe and western Asia and has become a serious rangeland pest in New Zealand, Tasmania, Australia, South Africa, and the Americas.

Distribution in Oregon: The first documented site in Oregon was in 1922 in Multnomah County and is now wide spread throughout western Oregon. Tansy ragwort is still very limited on the east side of Oregon. All eastside infestations are under intense management.

Description: It is generally a biennial or short-lived perennial; blooming midsummer to fall. It grows 1 1/2 – 4 feet tall. Leaves dark green, deeply lobed. Flowers are numerous, and bright yellow. Reproduction is entirely by seed. Mowed or grazed plants will regenerate to become a short-lived perennial when moisture conditions are adequate. Tansy ragwort’s seeds can lay dormant in the soil for 15 years.

Impacts: Prolific in pastures, clear cuts, and disturbed roadside areas, tansy populations can become quite dense. The leaves are toxic to cattle and horses, causing irreversible liver damage. In the 1960’s and 70’s livestock losses in Oregon amounted to 5 million dollars a year. Unlike cattle and horses, sheep appear to be unaffected by ragwort’s toxicity. Once considered Western Oregon’s most economically serious noxious weed, biological controls have reduced the severity of outbreaks below economic threshold levels.

Biological controls: Three biological control agents, a seed head fly, a flea beetle and a moth, are well established.

