

# Clallam County Noxious Weed Alert

## Tansy ragwort

*Jacobaea vulgaris*

Weed Class B Noxious Weed  
Control Required

### Identification

- Biennial plant (sometimes a winter annual or short lived perennial) growing 1-5 feet tall in the second year of growth.
- First year leaves are basal (growing close to the ground). Plant will form a flowering stalk in the second year with leaves growing up stalk.
- Leaves are deeply lobed with ruffled appearance and rounded edges.
- Flowerheads are in flat-topped clusters of many daisy-like yellow flowers.
- Each flower actually consists of many small flowers, surrounded by 13 ray flowers that look like petals.
- Tansy ragwort likes to grow in disturbed areas like roadsides, pastures, fields and cleared forests



### Impacts

**Toxins in tansy ragwort are harmful to humans and livestock and accumulate in the body, causing irreversible liver damage.**

Toxic properties can contaminate milk or honey, causing a threat to consumers of these products. All parts of the plant are poisonous when fresh or dry.

### Reproduction

Tansy ragwort usually reproduces by seed, although it can also reproduce vegetatively. A single tansy ragwort plant can produce between 5,000-200,000 seeds and remain viable in soils for up to 10 - 16 years.



### Look-a-likes

**Common St. johnswort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is a widespread noxious weed. Clallam County has native goldenrod species (*Solidago spp.*) that can be confused with tansy ragwort.**



Common St. Johnswort

Common St. Johnswort has yellow flowers that are 5-petaled with tiny purple dots along the petal margins.

Goldenrod flowers are not daisy-like and flowerheads are often shaped like a cone.



Native goldenrod



# Control Methods

**General:** Gloves should be worn at all times when removing tansy ragwort to protect from skin sensitivity. All plants parts are toxic and should be bagged and thrown away. Do not compost.

**Control often takes a couple of years, so checking infestations multiple times each year is necessary.**

**Mechanical:** Small infestations can be hand-pulled. Be sure to remove as much of the root as possible. Frequent mowing will not kill the plant, but can keep it from flowering and going to seed if done multiple times in the growing season. Tillage can spread root fragments, which can then grow into reproducing plants.

**Cultural:** Grazing is not recommended due to the irreversible liver damage caused by consuming tansy ragwort. Promoting competitive vegetation can slow the spread of tansy ragwort. The biological control agent cinnabar moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*) is already widely distributed throughout Clallam County. The larvae can defoliate tansy ragwort plants, but with our increasingly mild winters, tansy ragwort plants have been noted to fully recover, bloom and produce seeds. Be sure to remove tansy ragwort plants that are being eaten by cinnabar moth larvae.



**Chemical:** Please follow all regulations and labels when applying herbicides. Always wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when using herbicides. In some cases, like treatment in or around standing water, a permit or special license is required. Surfactant is recommended to be added to most herbicide mixes to allow the herbicide to better penetrate the treated plant surface. Do not cut or mow plants right before or for 2 weeks after application to allow the plant to absorb the herbicide. Please refer to the herbicide label for livestock and hay restrictions. Chemically treated plants can become more palatable to livestock when plants begin to wilt. Successful treatments will depend on the treatment location, site specifications, timing, and weather. **For more information about herbicides or site specific use, please contact the Noxious Weed Control Board.**

**\*For best control of tansy ragwort, treat when plants emerge in the spring and are rapidly growing to before flower buds form.**



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