



# Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 901 W. Smith Road Bellingham WA 98226  
(360) 715-7470 [www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/weeds](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/weeds)

## COMMON TANSY

*Tanacetum vulgare*

**THREAT:** Common tansy is native to Europe and was introduced to North America as an ornamental and medicinal plant. It has become established throughout most of the United States and Canada as a weed of roadsides, pastures, stream banks and disturbed areas. It reproduces both by seed and creeping roots, allowing it to spread quickly. Since livestock will not generally eat common tansy, it can quickly outcompete desirable pasture plants.

**DESCRIPTION:** Common tansy is a perennial that grows up to 6 feet tall. The stems are semi-woody and purplish-red near the bottom. Multiple stems grow from the base and the stems branch near the top. The extensive root system is strong and fibrous, spreading by rhizomes to create new plants. Common tansy has deeply divided, fern-like leaves and has a very strong smell, especially when the leaves are crushed. Common tansy flowers from July to the fall. The yellow disc flowers are  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch across and, lacking rays, look like yellow buttons. The flowers are borne in flat-topped, dense clusters, with numerous flower heads to a cluster. The stems remain erect into the winter, still bearing the dried flower heads. Common tansy is often confused with another noxious weed, tansy ragwort, which has kale-like leaves and yellow flowers with about 13 petals.

**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:** Common tansy can be controlled through cultural, mechanical and chemical means. This plant does not persist in repeatedly cultivated lands. Small infestations can be hand dug, although care must be taken to remove all of the tough root system and rhizomes, as root fragments will resprout. Pulling and mowing are largely ineffectual. Contact the weed board for chemical recommendation.

