



Control Options for Tansy Ragwort

General information

Livestock can be poisoned by tansy ragwort in different ways. When plants are young and low to the ground (rosette stage – pictured right) they can be grazed along with grass and other pasture forbs. Since the plants are still toxic when dried, animals are poisoned by eating contaminated hay as well. Control efforts for tansy ragwort are best initiated before the plants flower so it is good to recognize the plants early in the growing season. Regardless of which control option is chosen, sites must be monitored and control repeated for the weed to be eradicated. **Every tansy ragwort plant that goes to seed on your site has the potential to add 150,000 seeds to the soil.** If soil is disturbed during control efforts, it is best to reseed the disturbed area with a desired species to prevent further establishment of weeds. Encouraging grass growth through the use of fertilizers and/or rotational grazing will help prevent the reestablishment of weed species.



Manual/Mechanical Techniques

Tansy ragwort can be controlled through hand digging and/or pulling. Plants are easiest to pull after they have bolted (flowering stems elongate) but before flowering and when the soil is moist. When pulling, try to remove as much of the root as possible to prevent regrowth. If tansy ragwort is budding or flowering, the flower heads must be destroyed to prevent seed formation. If the buds/flowers are left on plants, the plants will still produce seed despite being uprooted or sprayed. Flower heads can be destroyed by thorough burning immediately after pulling/digging (be sure burning is allowed on the site and follow all legal requirements). Otherwise, flower heads should be sealed in plastic garbage bags and disposed as garbage. Do not compost buds or flowers. Do not leave plants where they can be eaten by livestock since dead or dried plants are still poisonous. Mowing is not an effective control for tansy ragwort. Tansy ragwort that has been mowed will often develop into a perennial plant, coming back year after year, rather than a biennial which ends its life cycle in two years.

Chemical Recommendations



Tansy ragwort can be controlled using specific herbicides and is generally most effective either before it flowers or in the fall to target rosettes that will overwinter. Timing of various products is listed below. When using herbicides, always read and follow label directions for rates, spraying conditions, personal protective equipment and grazing intervals. If spraying is the chosen option, spray late in the evening to reduce the direct impact on pollinating insects. Do not spray when it is windy or raining or when rain is forecast. Do not mow any sprayed plants for at least 2 weeks after herbicide application.

For most infestations of tansy ragwort, plants should be treated individually (spot-sprayed). Spray plants until they are just wet. For large infestations, it may be necessary to broadcast spray the entire area. Care should be used in allowing livestock to graze in areas where tansy ragwort has been treated with herbicides, as the dying plants may be more attractive to grazing animals. Herbicides should not be sprayed within 60 feet of water bodies and creeks, without further consultation with the Noxious Weed Board.

For chemically treating tansy ragwort, the Whatcom County Noxious Weed Board recommends using a selective broadleaf herbicide. Glyphosate is generally not recommended, as it will affect any vegetation it hits, including surrounding grass. Maintaining grass will assist in weed control efforts by shading weed seeds in the soil, making it

more difficult for weeds to germinate. Additionally, some of the glyphosate-based herbicide formulations available to the public (especially the Ready-to-Use products) are not concentrated enough to kill tansy ragwort.

2,4-D There are many herbicides containing 2,4-D. Tansy ragwort can be successfully treated using either low-volume ester or amine formulations of 2,4-D. Best results are obtained when plants are small or in the rosette stage, either in the spring or fall.

2,4-D + Dicamba (Weedmaster™, All-in-One Weed Killer™, others) or **2,4-D + Triclopyr** (Crossbow™, others) can be applied to tansy ragwort at any time up to flowering and again in the fall.

Aminopyralid (Milestone™, others) can be applied to actively growing rosettes.

Metsulfuron (Escort™, others) can be used on actively growing plants.

NEVER apply RoundUp® or other herbicides to standing water unless they are distinctly labeled for aquatic use. Ingredients in non-aquatic products may be toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms. Aquatic formulations of herbicides are generally only available to licensed pesticide applicators in Washington State. If the target plants are immediately adjacent to or are in standing water, a state permit may be required in order to treat those plants with an aquatically approved herbicide.

- **Always read and understand the label of the herbicides you choose to use.**
- **More is NOT better when using herbicides, and may actually hinder the ability of the herbicide to injure the target plant if the solution is too strong. This wastes money and effort and puts more product into the environment than is necessary. ALWAYS follow the recommended rates on the label.**
- **With all herbicides, when you apply them is as important as how you apply them.**

The mention of a specific product brand name in this document is not, and should not be construed as an endorsement or as a recommendation for the use of that product. Chemical control options may differ for private, commercial and government agency users. Herbicide information is taken from the WSU Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook

