



Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 322 N. Commercial St Bellingham WA 98225
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YELLOW TOADFLAX

Linaria vulgaris

THREAT: Yellow toadflax, also called butter-and-eggs, was introduced from Eurasia as a garden ornamental and now occurs across much of North America. It is found in a wide variety of habitats, such as road shoulders, pastures, gardens, rangeland and disturbed areas and can form dense monocultures, outcompeting native and desirable plants. It is usually not grazed by livestock and may be slightly toxic to animals. This can allow it to outcompete preferred pasture forage plants. This perennial plant reproduces both by rhizomes and by seed, which is produced in large numbers (up to 30,000 seeds per plant per year). These seeds are spread by wind, water, animals and vehicles, and can lie dormant in the ground for at least 8 years. These reproductive strategies allow it to quickly invade fields, rangeland and roadsides.

DESCRIPTION: Yellow toadflax is a perennial. Plants have multiple stems that grow to 31 inches tall, but are more commonly around 8 to 12 inches tall. The gray-green leaves are 1 to 4 inches long and are very narrow, with pointed tips. Leaves are arranged alternately on the usually unbranched stems. The stems and leaves are hairless. Yellow toadflax has snapdragon-like flowers and blooms from June to September. The yellow flowers have an orange throat, giving them the common name of butter-and-eggs. Flowers are borne towards the tops of the stems. Yellow toadflax has creeping roots, allowing it to spread vegetatively.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Yellow toadflax can be controlled through mechanical and chemical methods. Because of the aggressive, creeping root system, handpulling the plants is difficult and not very effective, except for very small infestations. Repeated clean cultivation (at least 8 cultivations per year) for two years may be effective in controlling toadflax. It is important to learn how to identify the plants while they are young to prevent establishment. It is also important to establish and maintain desirable grasses to compete with invading toadflax plants. Some chemical controls are effective. Contact the Weed Control Board for site-specific control recommendations.

