

Ragwort

Senecio jacobaea

- Biennial or perennial herb with fibrous root system.
- First year, plants form dense rosette of dark green leaves, deeply divided, wrinkled and flat to ground.
- Following year, flower stem up to 1.5m high is produced between Nov and April.
- Ragwort has characteristic bright yellow daisy-like flowers, arranged in large clusters at the ends of branches, which are visible from a great distance.
- Plants have an unpleasant smell when crushed.



Ragwort on branches



Rosettes



Declared weed under the Biosecurity Act 2019

Flowers

METHODS OF CONTROL

- Kingborough Council encourages an integrated approach to the management of ragwort, including the use of biological control agents such as the ragwort flea beetle, which is present in many areas.
- The beetle larvae burrow into the roots and crowns of ragwort plants and cause substantial damage. Although adult feeding is not regarded as having a significant detrimental effect on ragwort, during summer, large numbers of beetles can cause extensive leaf damage, characterised by the appearance of small “shot holes” in the leaves.
- If utilising biocontrol, landowners must control any flowering plants to prevent ragwort producing seed and spreading to neighbouring properties.
- An effective way to manage flowering plants is to cut off the flower heads, ensure they are placed inside two sealed bags and dispose of in general waste. The remaining ragwort plant must be controlled by digging out or spraying with an appropriate selective herbicide. If left untreated the plant will recover and flower again within a few weeks.
- Control of flowering plants can also be achieved through careful spot application of selective herbicides, such as Lontrel or Grazon Extra, no later than the green bud stage.
- Leave the non-flowering seedlings and rosettes intact for the ragwort flea beetle. This approach will allow population numbers of the beetle to steadily increase and assist in the control of ragwort not only your property, but across the wider landscape.



IMPACTS

Ragwort is a serious pasture weed in Tasmania. Ragwort plants are extremely competitive and can cause a significant reduction in pasture production. Ragwort plants are also poisonous to most types of livestock, and losses can occur when stock are forced to graze ragwort due to food shortages.

Ragwort can be invasive in many environments including roadsides, native forests and woodlands, threatening the biodiversity and habitat found in these areas.



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