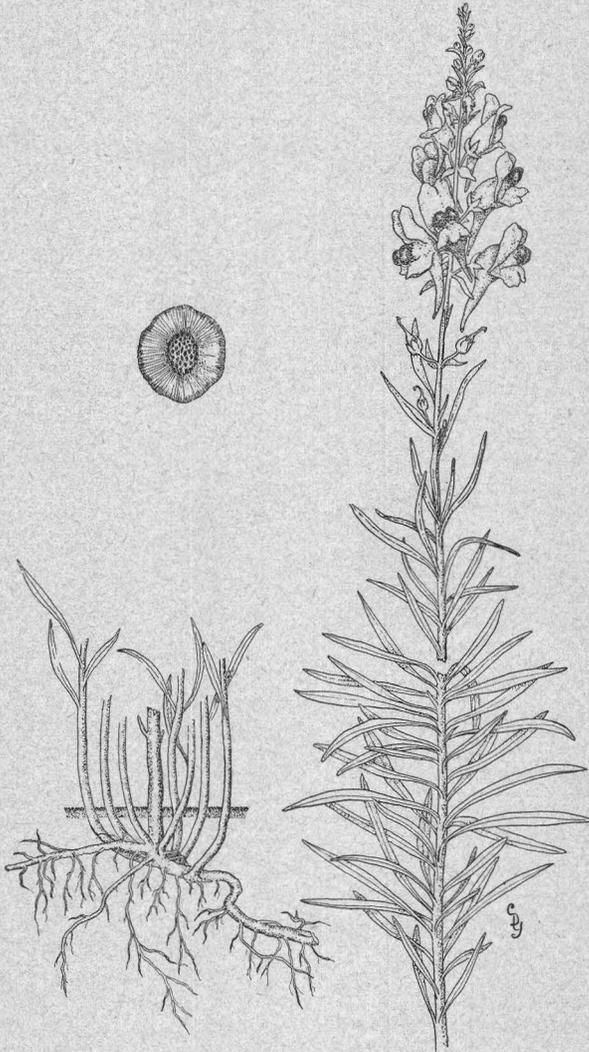


Yellow Toadflax

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YELLOW TOADFLAX—*Linaria vulgaris*—Showing stem with leaves and flowers, nature of root growth, and seed. Seed enlarged 7 diameters.

Oregon State System of Higher Education
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Oregon State College
Corvallis

Yellow Toadflax

(*Linaria vulgaris*)

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Illustrations by Cathrine Davis Young

Other common names: Butter-and-Egg, Wild snapdragon.

Yellow toadflax spreads by seed and by producing vigorous, woody, underground rootstocks. It does not occupy many large areas, but is found in practically all sections of the state. This plant was introduced from Europe and first planted as an ornamental in yards and around cemeteries, but now has escaped cultivation and become a rather serious weed in some sections. It produces very showy flowers and numerous pale green leaves. Many shoots are produced in clumps along the rootstocks giving the appearance of stools from a crown similar to alfalfa. The stems grow erect and are sometimes branched, smooth, and from 1 to 2 feet tall. Numerous leaves that are narrow, smooth, and pointed at both ends are produced along the woody stem. The snapdragon-type flowers are an inch or more in length and bright yellow with a deep orange center—hence the common name, "butter-and-egg." They are borne in erect, dense clusters that blossom progressively along the stem as it lengthens and grows. Seed is often found in the lower part of the plant while the flowers in the upper part are in various stages of blossoming. The seed is about 1/12 inch in diameter, dark brown to black, flat, and round. It possesses notched, papery margins or collars that act as wings and help the wind to carry the light seed. The brown, globe-shaped seed capsules are about 1/4 inch in diameter and composed of two chambers, each containing many seeds. The plants are reported to contain a poisonous glucoside and may be regarded with suspicion.†

Control. Yellow toadflax is considered to be as difficult to eradicate as Canada thistle. It is troublesome in cultivated fields, meadows, pastures, and waste places. If possible, infested areas should be put into a row crop for a few years. The next best treatment is to give such fields at least one season of summer fallow. The areas should be watched closely for a few years after treatment to make sure all the plants have been killed. If one plant is left alive, it will soon spread and develop a large patch again.

Sodium chlorate has proved effective in some sections for controlling the weed on small areas. It should be applied at the rate of 3 to 4 pounds to the square rod. Apply the dry chemical directly to the soil in the fall. This method has proved just as effective as spray applications on the weed in this state, and has the advantage that no expensive equipment is necessary. With the dry material, the fire hazard is cut to a minimum, and water hauling is eliminated. Care should be exercised to make sure that the area is covered evenly, and that treatment is made at least 4 feet outside the last visible plant.

Oregon Extension Bulletin 510 explains other methods of control.

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† Colorado Experiment Station, Bulletin 429.

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