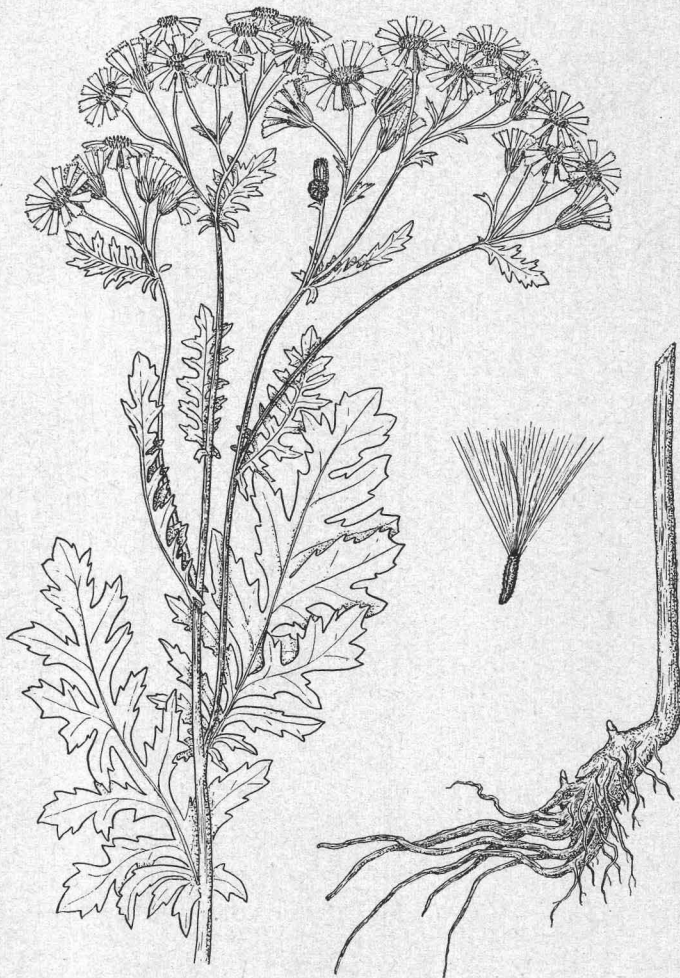


Tansy Ragwort, Seaside Tansy, and Tansy

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TANSY RAGWORT—*Senecio jacobaea*—Showing stem with leaves and flowers, root, and seed. Seed magnified 2 diameters.

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Tansy Ragwort, Seaside Tansy, and Tansy

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Illustrations by Cathrine Davis Young

Three weeds commonly found in Oregon are referred to as tansy. Their appearance and method of control are similar so all three will be discussed in this bulletin. Tansy ragwort, botanically speaking, is not a tansy at all, since it belongs to a different group of plants that are not even closely related to it. Its common name simply originated from the fact that to someone it resembled tansy. The other two; namely, common tansy and seaside tansy, are true tansies. All three tend to grow in dense patches that shade out, or crowd out, other plants. The patches usually spread very slowly from the roots.

TANSY RAGWORT

(*Senecio jacobaea*)

Other common names: Stinking willie, Staggerwort, Common ragwort.

Tansy ragwort, commonly found in the coast sections of Oregon, is the most troublesome of the three. It occurs also in the Willamette Valley, and has been reported in parts of eastern Oregon. This plant is poisonous to livestock, and may cause a fatal disease of the liver in cattle. Its taste is disagreeable, and it is not often eaten in pastures unless more desirable forage is scarce. It is eaten readily in hay, however, and patches in hay meadows should always be cut out and burned before putting up the hay crop. Tansy ragwort grows erect from 1½ to 4 feet tall. Stems from the base about half way to the tip generally have a distinct reddish or purplish color. It is sometimes woolly when young and this woolly condition is often seen on mature plants in the axils where the leaf and main stem join. The base of the leaf is attached directly to the main stalk without any stem. Leaves are from 5 to 9 inches long, dark green, with deeply cut edges. Flower heads are golden yellow, very showy, and are ½ to 1 inch across. They are borne in dense, flat-topped clusters.

Ragwort is a nonofficial drug. Decoctions of it were formerly used as a mouthwash and throat gargle, and in the treatment of catarrh and quinsy. The juice was reportedly very good for healing wounds.†

This weed is becoming a serious pest in pastures and range land in parts of western Oregon, especially in coast counties. It is rapidly spreading along watersheds and materially reducing the carrying capacity of pastures. Apparently the ground in some places is full of seeds that have been carried in by wind or water. Some farmers have plowed up the land and reseeded it to perennial pasture grasses, only to be confronted with a nearly solid stand of tansy ragwort. In some places this weed has gained a foothold in brushland where it is very difficult to prevent seed production. A few such neglected plants can infest acres of adjoining pasture. In such areas only community cooperation can eliminate the pest. It will do little good for one farmer to kill out his infestations if neighbors allow theirs to go unmolested. A weed control district as provided by the Oregon Weed Law might be justified in such areas.

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† Range Plant Handbook, Prepared by Forest Service, U.S.D.A.

SEASIDE TANSY

(*Tanacetum huronense*)

Seaside tansy grows from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet tall. Heads are a dull yellow, about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch across. They are produced in small clusters at the tip of the stalk. Leaves are more lacy in appearance than tansy ragwort, and the whole plant is finer. Stems are somewhat woolly.



SEASIDE TANSY—*Tanacetum huronense*—Showing entire plant and seed.
Seed magnified 3 diameters.

TANSY

(*Tanacetum vulgare*)

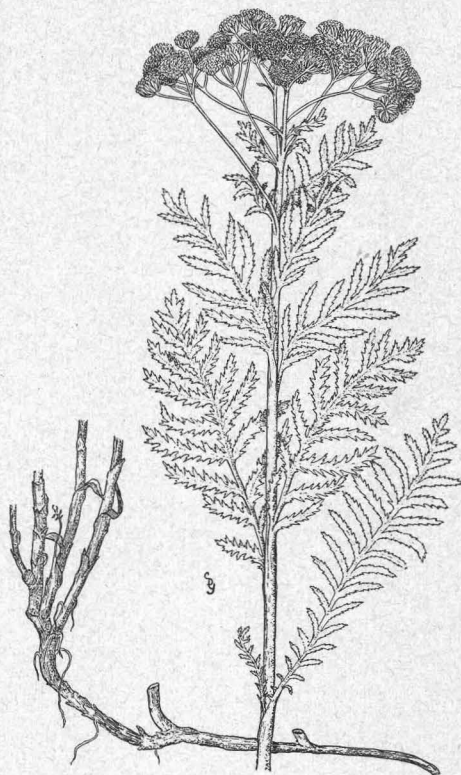
Other common names: Bitter buttons, Hind-head, and Parsley fern.

Tansy is the rankest growing of the three weeds mentioned in this bulletin. It often grows 5 feet in height. Leaves are larger than those of either of the others, often attaining 1 foot in length. The buttonlike heads are a dull golden brown, small, about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch across, and grow in very compact clusters.

Oil distilled from tansy and mixed with that of other plants, and diluted with alcohol, makes a "mosquito dope" useful to those who live in areas infested by mosquitoes.*

* Manual of Weeds by Ada Georgia, Macmillan Company.

Control. Little has been worked out in the control of these weeds in this state. It is reported from Canada† that frequent, close cuttings will give control. Sheep are apparently immune to poisoning from tansy ragwort, and close pasturing by these animals will often greatly reduce the stand and in some cases will kill out the weed. If the land can be cultivated, one season of



TANSY—*Tanacetum vulgare*—Showing stem with leaves and flowers, nature of root growth, and seed. Seed magnified 3 diameters.

cultivation should be effective in eliminating the old plants. Reinfestation from seed in the ground will probably be a problem for several years. For small areas, sodium chlorate, either applied dry or sprayed at the rate of at least 2 pounds per square rod, appears effective.

This is one of a series of 39 bulletins discussing 58 perennial weeds in Oregon and their control. A list of bulletins in this series will be found on the last page of Extension Bulletin 510. The individual bulletins are punched so that several may be bound together if desired.

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* Farm Weeds—Department of Agriculture, Canada.