

# Common Tansy

*Tanacetum vulgare*

## Description:

Common tansy is a perennial forb that reproduces by both seed and short rhizomes (underground horizontal roots). It grows best in full sun and fertile, well-drained soil. Introduced from Europe in the 1600's, its pungently aromatic foliage has been used medicinally, as an insect repellent, and for embalming.

**Stems** are branched, erect, often purplish-red, and dotted with glands. There are many stems per plant and grow up to 1.5 m tall.

**Leaves** alternate on the stem and are deeply divided into numerous narrow, individual leaflets with toothed edges.

**Flowers** are yellow, numerous, and button-like, occurring in dense, flat-topped clusters at the tops of the plants.



## Control

Common tansy forms dense stands and can be toxic to livestock. Since this plant is rhizomatous, flowering stems can regrow from severed roots, therefore cultivation is not a control option. Mowing before flowering will prevent seed production and will likely need to be repeated a few times over the growing season.

A number of herbicides can be used to manage Common tansy. Applications made between the rosette to early flowering stage give the best results.

The most effective control method combines mowing or hand cutting with chemical control and encouraging competition from native vegetation. Preventing seed production and dispersal checks the weed's spread, and repeated stem removal depletes the food energy stored in roots without the risk of producing root pieces that could result in the new plants. Herbicide applied at the correct time ensures chemicals get translocated into the root system where it will have the maximum effect.

Because of its long medicinal and horticultural use, Common tansy is still available in plant nurseries and from herbal remedy suppliers. Gardeners must be diligent about growing them only in pots and never allowing the plant to go to seed. Ideally, Invasive ornamentals should be avoided altogether.

