

Ragwort

(*Senecio jacobea*)

Is Ragwort on your property?

Ragwort is included in our Regional Pest Plant Management Strategy as a Boundary Control plant. Ragwort will largely be managed through a boundary control regime and enforcement will be request driven. Efforts to maintain clean land is recognised and regulations enforcing boundary will be adhered to. Please freephone 0508 800 800.



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Identification

Smelly biennial or perennial herb, 30-120 cm tall. Tap root with numerous fibrous roots. Leaves initially from a basal rosette with wavy toothed lobes. Stem leaves deeply cut. Ridged erect stems, usually purplish, carry a compact flat-topped terminal cluster of yellow daisy-like flowers to 2cm diameter in Nov-Apr. Seeds like thistle-down.

Weedy characteristics

Matures quickly producing massive numbers of long-lived seeds. Rapidly covers any bare spots or margins in full or partial light. Tolerates heat, cold, wet, dry and most soil conditions.

Methods of dispersal

Wind blows seeds over great distances. Carried by water, contaminated machinery, livestock and clothing.

Impact on indigenous plants

Forms dense stands in disturbed and grazed areas and can inhibit regeneration, but not usually a problem.

Typical habitats

Disturbed forest and scrub, tussock land and pasture, wetlands, inshore and off-shore islands, river margins, bare land and coastal areas throughout New Zealand.

Control

1. Ensure widespread introduction of the Ragwort Flea Beetle
2. Weed wiper: Use a broadleaf/thistle or metsulfuron-methyl herbicide during spring/summer at label rates.
3. Spray rosette plants: Broadleaf/thistle herbicide at label rates. Winter-spring only.
4. Spot spray: metsulfuron-methyl, broadleaf/thistle or glyphosate, at label rates. All year round.
5. Cut seedheads and burn, spray as in 4.

Site management

In pastoral areas avoid pugging of soil if possible and maintain a healthy thick grass sward to decrease ragwort seed germination.

Can be left in regenerating bush as it will disappear as light levels fall. Do not dig or pull plants except in drought conditions, as root fragments remain to regrow. Ragwort Flea Beetle gives good control but takes 2-5 years to be effective.

Species recovery

Damaged plants will usually regrow and form large, tough perennial crowns, necessitating the use of stronger, more residual herbicides.

