

Wednesday
July 23rd, 2025

Weed Wednesday

Foothills County

Issue #2



Common tansy- *Tanacetum vulgare*

Designation- Noxious

Introduced from Europe in the 1600's, common tansy is a perennial forb that has since been designated as an invasive species. It thrives in fertile, well-drained soil and full sun. Historically, its strong scent was used as insect repellent and had uses in embalming.

The leaves are fern-like and deeply divided into numerous narrow, individual toothed leaflets and the leaves alternate on the stem. It can grow up to 1.5 m tall and produces many stems per plant that are purplish red. At the top of the stems are dense, flat-topped clusters of yellow, button like flowers. Common tansy reproduces through short rhizomes and seed.



Achillea millefolium, common yarrow, is a native species to Alberta and comes in a variety of colors.



Common tansy can be toxic to livestock and humans when consumed in large quantities.

While it is toxic to humans and livestock in large quantities, sheep and goats have been known to graze on it without harm.

The most effective control method involves an integrated approach that combines mowing/hand pulling, using chemical control and encouraging competition with native vegetation. Repeated stem removal depletes the plants stored energy reserves in its roots while herbicides help kill the root system directly. Aminopyralid, Chlorsulfuron, Metsulfuron-methyl and Tribenuron are registered chemical controls for Common tansy. Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the target plant.

It is also known as Bitter buttons, Cow bitter and Golden buttons. It can sometimes be found within the nursery trade. When purchasing ornamental plants, make sure to purchase from a reputable supplier and to check the scientific name.

Common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is a native species to Alberta that is drought tolerant and can be mistaken for common tansy.

If you would like more information, please contact Kathleen at Kathleen.mchugh@foothillscountyab.ca or at 403-603-5409.