

September Weed of the Month

Yellow Toadflax

Linaria vulgaris

FACT

Yellow toadflax was introduced from Eurasia as an ornamental.

Provincial Designation: **NOXIOUS**- must be controlled in Alberta

Reproduction: Yellow toadflax can reproduce both by seeds and vegetatively. Vegetative reproduction enables a stand of toadflax to spread rapidly. Stems develop from adventitious buds on primary and lateral roots. These buds can grow their own root and shoot system, and become independent plants the next year. Yellow toadflax colonies persist mostly via vegetative means.

Environment: Yellow toadflax rapidly colonizes open sites. It is most commonly found along roadsides, fences, rangelands, croplands, clear cuts, and pastures. Disturbed or cultivated ground is a prime candidate for colonization. The seedlings of yellow toadflax are considered ineffective competitors for soil moisture with established perennials and winter annuals. However, once established, yellow toadflax suppresses other vegetation mainly by intense competition for limited soil moisture. Mature plants are particularly competitive with winter annuals and shallow-rooted perennials.

Impacts: Yellow toadflax contains a poisonous glucoside that is reported to be mildly poisonous to cattle. However, the plant is considered unpalatable and reports of livestock poisonings are rare.

Often Confused With: Before flowering, this weed is often confused with leafy spurge, however toadflax does not contain the milk latex that leafy spurge does when the stem or leaves are cut.





Identification

Lifecycle: Perennial Forb

Stems: Mature yellow toadflax plants are 1-3 ft. tall with 1-25 smooth erect floral stems.

Leaves: Leaves are narrow, lance-shaped, soft, and pale green. Leaves are mainly alternate but lower leaves appear to be opposite due to crowding.

Flowers: Flowers are bright yellow and resemble snapdragons. Flowers are arranged in a raceme at the ends of branches.

Seeds: Capsules are round-ovate, 0.3-0.5 in long, and two-celled. Seeds are brown or black, circular, and surrounded by a notched wing.

Roots: Taproots may be up to 3 ft. long. Horizontal roots may grow to be several yards long, and can develop adventitious buds that may form independent plants.

Control

Mechanical: Where the soil is soft you may be able to pull the toadflax with its intact root system. Repeated pulling should occur to deplete the seed bank. Recurring mowing may assist by starving the roots. Repetitive cultivation can destroy the perennial root system, however you should consult with your agricultural fieldman in regards to soil conservation. All equipment should be thoroughly cleaned afterward.

Chemical: There are several products available that work very well on this weed. **Your Ag Fieldman can suggest the best herbicide for your infestation location (in-crop, pasture, roadside, etc).** Common chemicals used include: Acetic acid Amitrole, Dichlorprop, Diuron, Glyphosate, Hexazinone, Imazapyr, MCPA, Metsulfuron-methyl, Picloram. Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the target plant in Canada by the PMRA.

Biological: A stem mining weevil, *Mecinus janthinus*, has been successfully established in Alberta for control.

Grazing: Because toadflax is unpalatable to livestock this is not a viable option.

SEEN THIS WEED? Give your local Ag Fieldman a call!

Special Areas 2: Jesse Williams (403) 854-1114 (or send a text!)

Special Areas 3: Don Hogan (403) 664-3006

Special Areas 4: Justine Simpson (403) 577-3523