



# Common Tansy



flower



leaves



seedhead

# Common Tansy

**Genus:** Tanacetum

**Species:** vulgare

**Priority Listing:** 2B

**Perennial**

Common tansy is native to Eurasia and has a long history of use dating back to the ancient Greeks. Historically, common tansy was used for treating various medical conditions, preserving meats, and as an insect repellent and was brought to North America as a medicinal plant.

In 1936, Silver Bow County was the first county in Montana to report having common tansy. This noxious weed tends to **inhabit** roadsides, ditch banks, fence lines as well as other types of disturbed areas.

Common tansy reproduces through seeds that are yellowish brown in color with short five-toothed crowns. Seeds can be distributed and spread to new areas by wind and water as well as by transportation from animals and humans.

Common tansy also reproduces from buds on its stout, **woody rootstock** and **rhizomes**.

Common tansy is easily recognizable by the flat-topped clusters of small, button-like, yellow flower heads that are  $\frac{1}{4}$ " to  $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter; flowers bloom in mid to late summer.

**Camphor:** a strong smelling compound made from the leaves of the camphor tree

**Integrated Weed Management Techniques:** the combination of multiple management tools to reduce a pest population to an acceptable level while preserving the quality of existing habitat, water, and other natural resources

**Inhabit:** to live in, reside in, or be present in

**Lobes:** rounded patterns of a leaf edge, reaching up to halfway to the petiole

The stalk of common tansy is often purplish-red in color and grows in clusters, giving the plant a bush like appearance.

Leaves of common tansy are alternate, fern like in appearance, and are divided almost to the center into about seven pairs of **lobes** which have saw-toothed edges.

The scent of common tansy is similar to **camphor** and the leaves are toxic if eaten in large quantities causing convulsions as well as liver and brain damage.

Common tansy can be controlled by various **integrated weed management techniques**. If hand pulling common tansy, it is best to wear gloves as it has been reported to cause illness, suggesting that the toxins within the plant are absorbed through unprotected skin.



Photo courtesy of Matt Lavin, via Flickr

**Perennial:** a plant whose life spans several years

**Rhizomes:** a perennial underground stem that usually grows horizontally

**Toxins:** a poisonous substance made within living cells of an organism, or created by humans through science

**Woody Rootstock:** roots that appear more like wood, tough and often with grooved deep lines