

Common Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*)

DESCRIPTION:

Common ragweed is a native species which can become problematic in young prairies and agricultural fields. This annual species is a member of the aster family, though is unusual to that family for being wind pollinated. The tiny airborne pollen particles are the cause of hay fever allergies. Although ragweed doesn't appear to have much value from a human viewpoint, they do have value for wildlife. Over a dozen species of moths are known to feed on the foliage of ragweeds, as do grasshoppers. The seeds of common ragweed are an important food source for native songbirds and upland game birds such as bobwhite and prairie chickens. This species is found in highly disturbed soils such as agricultural fields, construction sites, road edges and other waste areas in full sun to light shade but cannot compete with perennial species in more established landscapes.

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Pesky
Native

IDENTIFICATION:

Common Ragweed is a mid-sized weedy plant that grows from 1' to 4' in height. The leaves are finely divided, and somewhat reminiscent of ferns or parsley. The stems are hairy and often reddish. The green flower stalks on the top of the plant are not showy and they "bloom" in late summer or early fall. When damaged, the plant releases a distinctive odor. Western ragweed is very similar and is most often found along rail corridors and drier soil. Bur marigold, a native weed, has somewhat similar vegetation.



CONTROL METHODS:

Organic: Common Ragweed is most effectively controlled by cutting and mowing in late summer, immediately before they go to bloom or early in the blooming period. Plants can also be pulled up by the roots, however this will cause soil disturbance.

Chemical: Ragweed will also be killed if sprayed with a solution of glyphosate, but a well-timed mowing is just as effective and does not require the use of herbicides.

Always read herbicide labels carefully before use and always apply according to the instruction on the product label.

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES:

Since this is a full-sun weed we recommend a diverse selection of prairie species to replace and compete against ragweed in order to develop a more stable and productive plant community for the site. Contact us for specific recommendations.

