



Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)

Overview

Although a beautiful flower and long popular by gardeners, song-writers and poets, ox-eye daisy is an invasive plant. Ox-eye daisy is a perennial in the sunflower family. A native of Eurasia, it has been introduced through seed mixes and sold as an ornamental used in gardens, but has escaped from cultivation and has become a persistent invader along roadsides and in the communities.

Infestations in Yukon are found in Dawson, Watson Lake, Haines Junction, Whitehorse, Mount Lorne and along the Haines Highway at Dezadeash Lake and the Alaska Highway at Morley and Rancheria rivers and Johnson's Crossing.

Ox-eye daisy is widespread in Alaska and northern BC.

Ox-eye daisy is difficult to eradicate because of its large seed bank, long viability of seeds and ability to re-sprout from roots if not completely removed.



Ox-eye daisy has become a serious invader of pastures and natural areas.

Identification

Flowers: Ox-eye daisy resembles a typical daisy. The flowers are born singly at the end of stems and can be up to 5cm in diameter. They have a yellow centre and are surrounded by 20 to 30 white radiating petals.

Stems: Numerous stems rising from the shallow and creeping root system (rhizome). Stems are hairless and can reach 1 m.

Leaves: The basal and lower leaves are spatula-shaped with "toothed" margins and petioles that may be as long as the leaf. The upper stem leaves are alternate, smooth and glossy. Leaves are reduced in size upwards and the leaf stalks are short and clasp the stem.

Seed: One plant can produce over 500 seeds that are viable in the soil for at least 2-3 years.



Petal tips are slightly notched



Lance shaped leaves with "toothed" margins

Similar Species

Scentsless chamomile (*Tripleurospermum perforata*) has smaller flower heads (2–3 cm diameter) and has finely divided fennel-like leaves. Scentsless chamomile is also invasive. **Shasta daisy** (*Leucanthemum maximum* & *L. x superbum*), an ornamental, is larger (approximately 20-30 cm taller) and has flower heads with greater diameter than ox-eye daisy. Shasta daisy is a horticultural cultivar originally derived from the ox-eye daisy in the early 20th century. As a hybrid, the Shasta daisy may revert to its ox-eye origins. Scentsless chamomile and shasta daisy are invasive plants.

The only Yukon native plant that resembles ox-eye daisy is the seashore chamomile *Tripleurospermum maritimum*. It is found only on the Arctic coast

Ecological Impact

Ox-eye daisy reproduces by seeds and rhizomes (an underground stem that sends out roots and shoots). Plants form colonies that continually increase in size, dominate infested sites and crowd out desirable native and forage species.

Prevention

- Do not purchase nursery plants or seed labelled as ox-eye daisy.
- Replace ox-eye daisy with non-invasive alternatives such as cosmos.
- Avoid using so-called 'wildflower' seed mixes that contain invasive *ornamentals*.
- Maintain healthy plant communities in pastures. They are more likely to be resistant to invasion.
- Deadhead flowers to avoid seed production.
- After removal all plant parts should be placed in a clear plastic bag and left in the sun to kill the seed because daisies continue to produce seed even after pulling or deadheading.
- After leaving the bags in the sun to roast for an adequate time, bring them to the landfill, where they should be buried shortly after being dropped off.
- To minimize the risk of dispersing seed as you remove or transport the plant, put the flowers and seed heads into the bag head first.
- Avoid composting.
- Minimize soil disturbance.



Ox-eye daisy commonly spreads outside of gardens

Control

Mechanical: Repeated mowing prevents seed production, but also can stimulate re-sprouting of stems. Hand-pulling or digging before flowering is effective, but it is important to remove as much of the fibrous roots and rhizomes as possible. Repeated efforts will be required – both throughout the growing season and in subsequent years.

Chemical: Several herbicides are effective at controlling ox-eye daisy when applied to growing plants up to the flowering stage. Consult Yukon's Agriculture Branch for more information.

Biological: None researched to date.

Habitat

Ox-eye daisy prefers full sun but tolerates a wide range of environmental conditions. It grows in nutrient poor soils often along roads or in disturbed areas.



Ox-eye daisy on the Haines Road at Dezadeash Lake.

Photo: L. Freese, KNPR

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