



Scentsless Chamomile

(*Tripleurospermum perforatum* syn. *T. inodorum*)

SK Provincial Designation: Noxious

Overview:

Scentsless chamomile can behave as an annual, biennial, or sometimes a perennial, but reproduces by seed only. Plants are usually very bushy and have a fibrous root system. It continually blooms, forms seed, and seeds germinate throughout the growing season: fall seedlings overwinter and are usually first to flower in spring. Native to Europe, it was introduced as an ornamental and/or a contaminant in crop seed. This is not the chamomile used for tea as it is scentless.

A single, robust plant can occupy one full square meter and produce up to one million seeds.

Scentsless chamomile and oxeye daisy are often mistaken for each other as the flowers are nearly identical, but the leaves are very different. Both plants are weeds - there are no native white-flowered daisies in Saskatchewan.

It can also be confused with stinking mayweed or pineapple weed, but the foliage of these two plants has an odor.



ABOVE: Scentsless chamomile infestation (photo uncredited)

BELOW LEFT: Scentsless chamomile plant flowering and in seed (photo uncredited)

Habitat:

Scentsless chamomile is well adapted to heavy clay soils and tolerates both periodic flooding and dry sites. It is a poor competitor but establishes quickly on disturbed sites. The seeds float on water and are widely dispersed this way.

Identification:

Stems: Stems are erect to semi-erect, highly branched, may be reddish in color, and can grow up to 1 m tall. There can be a few to many stems per plant.

Leaves: Leaves are alternate and very finely divided into short segments (carrot-like) and odorless when crushed. Basal leaves disappear by flowering time.

Flowers: Flowers are composed of a yellow central disk surrounded by white petals. The flowers are borne singly at the end of stems and have numerous bracts, arranged in overlapping rows.

Seed: Seed are tiny (about 2 mm), ribbed and dark brown. Seeds develop and become viable quickly.

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INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

Scentsless Chamomile *(continued)*

Prevention:

Scentsless Chamomile does not compete well with vigorous, healthy plant communities. Dispersal by weed seed contamination in crop/grass seed and livestock forage is common. It can be very difficult to eradicate in crop situations.

Control:

Grazing: Scentsless chamomile is generally unpalatable to grazers and its seeds can survive digestion. *Invasive plants should never be considered as forage.*

Cultivation: Late fall and early spring tillage will control rosettes. Frequent, shallow tillage can help exhaust the seed bank by repeatedly destroying germinating seedlings. Equipment must be cleaned after.

Mechanical: Mowing can prevent seed production but plants will re-bloom below the cutting height. Hand-pulling can prevent spread into new areas and is effective on small infestations. Pulled plants should be burned or bagged and sent to the landfill. Burning infestations that have finished blooming can prevent seed spread.

Chemical:¹ Picloram and clopyralid are effective. Late fall or early spring applications will control rosettes. Several products are registered for use in crop situations. Consult your Regional Forage Specialist, the Saskatchewan Agriculture Knowledge at 1-866-457-2377 or the Guide to Crop Protection Centre for more information.

Biological: A seed-head feeding weevil, *Omphalapion hookeri*, and a gall midge, *Rhopalomyia tripleurospermi*, have been released in Saskatchewan.



TOP RIGHT: Scentsless chamomile flower (photo by Phil Sellens)
BOTTOM RIGHT: Scentsless chamomile leaves (photo by Rob Hille)

Always follow the product labels. Pesticides should only be applied by certified pesticide applicators. The use of pesticides in any manner not published on the label or registered under the *Minor Use of Pesticides* regulation constitutes an offence under both the *Federal Pest Control Products Act* and provincial acts in Saskatchewan. For the latest information on pesticides for agricultural use in Saskatchewan, please consult the provincial *Guide To Crop Protection*, produced annually by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture.