

OX-EYE DAISY

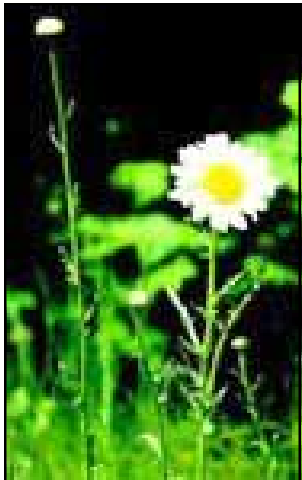
(White daisy, field daisy)

What does it look like?

Ox-eye daisy is a creeping perennial with fairly shallow roots. The flowers are white with yellow disc florets in the center. Flowers are 2-6 cm in diameter and found at the end of the stems. All parts of the plants have a strong, unpleasant odour and stems can grow as tall as 1 m. Stems are usually unbranched, hairless, and leaves have wavy to lobed margins and are not fernlike like scentless chamomile. The base of the leaves clasp the stem and the leaf size and width are reduced as you travel up the stem.



It is difficult to distinguish from Shasta daisy (*Chrysanthemum maximum* L.), a common ornamental perennial. Shasta daisy is often more robust, most notably with larger flower heads. Ox-eye daisy is far more invasive, spreading quickly once introduced and has a more spindly appearance.



Its weedy nature

Ox-eye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum* L.) is a non-native plant of European origin that was originally a garden plant. When eaten by dairy cattle, ox-eye daisy can impart a disagreeable taste to the milk.

It spreads both by seed and by limited rooting of prostrate stems. Impacts are mainly in pasture and perennial forage as the shallow root system does not survive regular cultivation. Once established, this weed can greatly alter the productivity of a pasture by replacing grasses, especially in an overgrazed system with low soil fertility. Livestock will selectively graze around the daisy, and this greatly reduces the competitive ability of the forage crop.

Its control

Recent tests in Alberta were conducted to develop practical, cost effective means for controlling this weed for increased yields and longer maintenance of better quality forage. Results showed that artificial shading of the daisy plants decreased their biomass. An 85% reduction in light intensity reduced ox-eye daisy rosette biomass by 70% and seedling biomass by 92%. Also, under low light conditions, the ox-eye daisy plants were unable to respond to increases in fertilizer.

When NPKS fertilizer was applied in the spring to soil test recommendations for 2 years, forage yield was increased and ox-eye daisy was significantly reduced. In a fenced-off pasture, daisy numbers decreased from 100 flowering shoots per m² to zero flowering shoots per m².

Chemical control in the year of application was achieved by using Escort (metsulfuron methyl) at 12 g/ac). This was applied in May when plants were less than 10 cm in height. This herbicide however, also removed the legume component of the forage, and reduced forage competition.

Spring applied fertilizer increased grass growth and competition so that the year following herbicide



treatment, reduced ox-eye daisy numbers were maintained.

Although few herbicides are registered for ox-eye daisy control, Escort and Grazon contain active ingredients for general broadleaf weed control. It is important to remember these will reduce competition in the forage stands by taking out legume and other non-weedy broadleaf plants.

Photographic credits to Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the British Columbia, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Field Guide to Noxious and Other Selected Weeds of British Columbia and Strathcona County, Environmental Operations.
© 2002 Strathcona County