

SCENTLESS CHAMOMILE

Tripleurospermum perforatum syn. *T. inodorum*



Overview:

Scentless 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 metre and produce up to one million seeds. Scentless 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 odour.

Habitat:

Scentless 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. The seeds are also dispersed by human activities.

Identification:

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

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

Scentless 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. This plant can cause yield losses of up to 25%.

Prevention:

Simply do not grow it and always check wildflower mixes for invasive species before planting.

Control:

Grazing: Scentless 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 rebloom 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: Aminopyralid (alone or in a product mix with 2,4-D or Metsulfuron-methyl), Chlorsulfuron, Clopyralid (alone or in a product mix with MCPA), Dicamba, Glufosinate ammonium, Hexazinone, Picloram, MCPA (in a product mix with Bromoxynil), Metsulfuron-methyl and Tribenuron-methyl (in a product mix with Thifensulfuron-methyl) are registered for use on scentless chamomile. Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the target plant in Canada by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Always read and follow label directions. Consult your local Agricultural Fieldman or Certified Pesticide Dispenser for more information.

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

