

A M E N I T Y

ADVISORY BRIEF

Background

- Common Ragwort -*Senecio jacobaea*- is highly toxic to grazing animals, especially horses.
- Common Ragwort is an injurious weed covered by the 1959 Weeds Act - www.defra.gov.uk/farm/wildlife/weeds/pdf/injurious-weeds.pdf.

It is an offence to allow it to spread on your land. Recent amendments to the act require the occupier of the land to comply with the Ragwort Code of Practice*. Failure to do so can be used in prosecution.

- Common ragwort is usually a biennial weed which grows to the rosette stage in the first season, flowering - yellow daisy like flower - in the second season. It frequently behaves as a perennial, especially after cutting.

Control

Use an integrated approach to ragwort control using a combination of cultural, mechanical, biological or chemical methods. Always take advice from a BASIS qualified advisor.

- The weed can be pulled out by hand or machine making sure that the entire plant is removed including roots - cutting alone is not satisfactory. Gloves and coverall should be worn when hand pulling or handling the weed.
- Cinnabar moth caterpillars may offer some degree of biological control.
- The best time to control ragwort with selective herbicides, containing 2,4-D, MCPA and picloram, is in the spring when second year plants are at the rosette stage and new seedlings are starting to germinate. Choose only products with label recommendations for control of ragwort.
- Use glyphosate in situations where retaining grass is not important or when using a weed-wiper. Glyphosate is best applied to flowering ragwort, but before seeds have set.

* Ragwort Code of Practice

The new code of practice for the Control of Ragwort is available at www.defra.gov.uk/farm/wildlife/weeds/pdf/cop_ragwort.pdf



Other Ragwort Species

There are other widespread ragwort species viz. Marsh Ragwort, Hoary Ragwort and Oxford Ragwort plus some that are rare. The provisions of the Weeds Act only apply to Common Ragwort. Some rare species such as Fen Ragwort are protected.

Sensible Spraying

- When using a pesticide always follow the label instructions and ensure that application is carried out by a NPTC qualified operator
- Take care to avoid water pollution when mixing, filling, during application and disposal
- Check and calibrate your sprayer before use
- If you have any queries contact your BASIS qualified advisor at your supplier