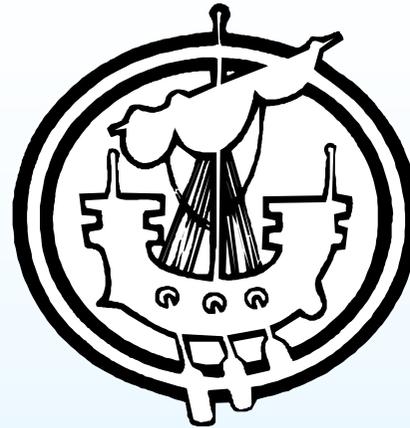


## Further Advice

*It is not a legal requirement to report the growth of Ragwort on your property however, livestock owners are responsible for the welfare of their animals and they should be satisfied that their animals are not at risk of Ragwort poisoning.*

*You are advised to contact your local Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate on 01851 702392 for further information.*



### **Comhairle nan Eilean Siar**

Development Department  
Sandwick Road  
Stornoway  
Isle of Lewis HS1 2BW

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## **RAGWORT**

### Identification and Treatment

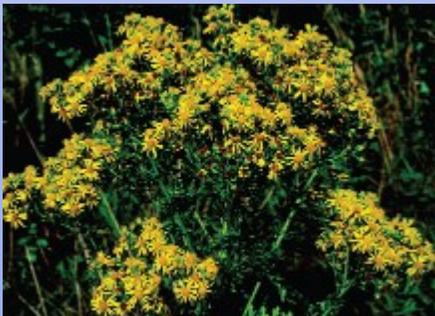


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## IDENTIFICATION

- Ragwort grows between 30-90cm high and is an erect plant.
- The stems are tough with a red tinge near the base, bright green further up with branches sprouting from the middle.
- The leaves are irregular with jagged edges. All the leaves are dark green and tough with hairs on the underside.
- The flat heads are packed tightly with yellow flowers and the seeds are easily dispersed with the ability to lie dormant in soil for several years before germinating.
- Ragwort is widespread throughout the UK and can be found on roadside verges, wasteland, conservation areas, woodland and grazing land.
- It can be found in all soil types and is often a characteristic of badly managed grasslands, where there is over or under grazing or disturbance in grass verges resulting in open soil, perfect for seedlings.



## ISSUES RELATING TO RAGWORT

- Common Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea* is a native species to the British Isles. It is a specified weed under the Weeds Act 1959.
- Ragwort is very important for wildlife in the UK, acting as a food source for many insects.
- Ragwort contains PAs or Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids which are highly toxic to a number of animals including cattle and horses. The toxins can result in severe liver damage and death.
- A single plant in a bale of silage can be enough to poison a number of animals.
- Ragwort can also be harmful to humans. The skin can absorb toxins and there can be transference to food.



## TREATMENT

- There is Guidance from the Scottish Government on How to Prevent the Spread of Ragwort available at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications)
- Responsibility for control lies with the occupier of the land where the plant is growing.
- Pulling of plants can prevent seeds from spreading and can give long-term control. Operatives must be supplied with Personal Protective Equipment for the task.
- Plants must be removed and safely disposed of. Whenever possible small amounts of the plant should be disposed of on-site by composting, incineration, controlled burning or land-filling.
- Ragwort should only be transported in sealed bags or enclosed containers as the plant can disperse seeds even after being dug out or pulled.
- It is not permitted to dispose of Ragwort in your organic waste bin.
- Agricultural waste comes within the definition of commercial waste and must comply with the Waste Management Regulations. SEPA should be consulted and they can be contacted on 01851 706477.
- Herbicides can be used but are regarded as a last resort after all other avenues have been tried.

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