

St. Johnswort  
*Hypericum perforatum*

Currently in Montana, noxious weeds infest about 7.6 million acres (Montana's Noxious Weed Management Plan, 2008). Many of these state listed noxious weeds were brought to America as ornamentals for gardens, medicinal purposes, by accident in discarded soil from a ship's ballast or unintentionally in bags of seed brought from other parts of the world. Whatever the cause of introduction, 32 non-native plant species have found their way onto Montana's state noxious weed list.

St. Johnswort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is a Priority 2B listed noxious weed in the state of Montana. Priority 2B species are noxious weeds that are abundant in Montana and widespread in many counties. Management criteria for these species includes eradication or containment where these species are less abundant. Management for these species shall be prioritized by local weed districts. Species listed as Priority 2B noxious weeds are: Canada thistle, field bindweed, leafy spurge, whitetop, Russian knapweed, spotted knapweed, diffuse knapweed, dalmation toadflax, St. Johnswort, sulfur cinquefoil, common tansy, oxeye daisy, houndstongue, yellow toadflax, and saltcedar.

St. Johnswort is a perennial that is native to Europe, North Africa and Asia and was introduced into the United States in Pennsylvania in 1696 because it was thought that this plant had magical properties. Throughout history, St. Johnswort has been used for many medicinal purposes including the treatment of depression.

This plant typically inhabits areas that have been disturbed including right-of-ways, roadsides, meadows, pastures, waste places, disturbed ground and rangeland. This plant contains a chemical that is toxic to animals if this plant is eaten in large quantities.

St. Johnswort has a long taproot and can reproduce by its numerous creeping lateral, rhizomatous roots. The stems of this plant can grow up to 3' in height and branch many times toward the top of the plant. The leaves of this plant are yellow-green in color, 1" long, oval in shape, and have smooth edges. If held up to the light, the leaves have tiny transparent dots that cover the entire leaf surface; these transparent dots are small oil glands.

The flowers of St. Johnswort are yellow, have five petals, and bloom from late spring and early to mid-summer. On the edges of the petals are tiny black dots and flowers are borne at the ends of the stems and are 1" or less in diameter. Upon pollination, the seeds are produced in 3 sectioned pods that are filled with tiny dark brown seeds. A single plant can produce up to 100,000 seeds per year! The seeds of St. Johnswort can remain viable in the soil for decades and will germinate if the ground is disturbed.

St. Johnswort is best managed by hand pulling, biological control, the use of herbicides and cultivation. Often control measures are most successful by using a combination of control methods. Please take a few moments to learn about St. Johnswort and the other state listed noxious weeds. If noxious weeds are not currently a problem in your area, they may be in the near future. For more information about Montana's state listed noxious weeds, regulated plants, or weed species listed on your county weed list, please contact your local county weed district (can list weed district name here... ex: Lewis & Clark County Weed District) at (406) (Phone number). Or you can contact the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-3144.