



South Gippsland Landcare Network

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Fish Creek Ragwort Field Day - Thursday 24 August 2017

Ragwort Trial to evaluate various control options in pasture

About this plant:

Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea* (family Compositae) is a perennial herb and a native of Europe.

Plants can produce over 200 000 seeds, these remain viable in the soil for up to 15 years. (Clover seed is viable for 12 years, barley grass 3-4 years, thistle seeds last 30- 40 years).

Ragwort leaves and stems contain an alkaloid that is toxic to cattle, sheep and horses. The plant is toxic when both fresh and dry, including when fed in silage or hay.



It is an herbaceous biennial or perennial herb, reproducing from crowns, roots and seeds.

Most seeds fall near the parent plant ie within 20 metres, but may also be spread by wind, water, animals, farm implements, agricultural produce including hay, on clothing and even the farm bike or ute.

In its first year a ragwort seedling grows to form a rosette, in its second year some plants mature and flower while some plants may be up to five years old before they flower.

Fortunately many plants die as rosettes - it is at this time when they are most vulnerable to competition particularly if they are in a pasture maintaining dense ground cover.



Seedlings appear mostly in autumn and spring and grow as rosettes until spring of the following year when more upright foliage (referred to as the 'cabbage' stage) is produced. Flowering stalks develop later in spring and over summer, with peak flowering from late January to March. Some odd plants may flower at any time. After seed set the plants turn brown and die.

Ragwort prefers humid temperate areas, and is usually found on heavy soils with moderate fertility, it is common in poorly managed or degraded pastures. It is also found in natural areas often near the coast. Ragwort is tolerant of frost and has some drought tolerance.

