

This Week In The World Of Weeds

Goat's-Beard (*Tragopogon dubius*)

Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon dubius*) also known as Yellow goatsbeard or Yellow salsify is a member of the thistle family. Originally from Europe it is a biennial that is infrequently found in fields but more commonly found around field edges, pastures, meadows, roadsides and disturbed areas.



Figure 1. Flower top view



Figure 2. Flower underside showing green involucre bracts

Biology: Goat's-beard forms a rosette in the first season. The leaves are long, linear in shape and can be mistaken for grass leaves prior to the appearance of the flowering stalk.

The leaves are smooth, alternately arranged with a single leaf per node and gradually tapering to a point (**Figure 3**). The stems, leaves and roots contain a white milky sap when cut or broken.

The flowering stalks appear in the second-year. The flowers are yellow in colour with green involucre bracts* (**Figure 2**). The plants form large spherical seed heads 7 to 10 cm across resembling a giant dandelion seed head. The seeds have a pappus and are spread by the wind.



Figure 3. Leaves

Similar Weeds: Meadow Goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis* can be distinguished at flowering as the involucre bracts are only as long as; or are shorter; than the yellow florets. The flowers of Meadow goat's-beard are a brighter yellow and the leaves curl upwards at the tip.

Weed Act Status: Meadow goat's-beard is classified as noxious in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Goat's-beard is a noxious weed in Ontario.

Herbicide Resistance: Herbicide resistance is not known in to this weed anywhere in the world.

*Involucre bracts are bracts surrounding the flowers in some plant families