



Weed of The Week

Cress leaf Groundsel (*Senecio glabellus*.)

This week's weed of the week features a little yellow flower that likes to take control of our no-till crop fields and newly seeded forage fields. Cress leaf Groundsel is a member of the Aster family and is also known by many other names such as butterweed and golden ragwort. This weed is a winter annual meaning that it is established and starts growing in the fall and breaks dormancy very early in the spring, flowering and releasing seed early in spring. Depending on the spring weather conditions, flowering can take place as early as mid-April and seed production can end as early as mid-May. Seed production can be as many as 100,000 seeds that grow very well on the surface of the soil. Identifying this weed can be confusing in the fall, yellow rockets can be very similar in growth with alternate leaf orientation, but Cress leaf Groundsel will have the opposite orientation. Lobes of the leaf are serrated and have toothed margins. The key Identifier of Cress leaf Groundsel is its purple hollow stems with no hair. Cress leaf Groundsel is considered one of the leading toxic plants to livestock due to containing compounds called pyrrolizidine alkaloids. These compounds metabolized in the liver causing liver failure in the animal. Most of the time consumption of this weed is rare unless other forages are not available, sheep species seem to be a little more resistant to poisoning than cattle and horses. Plant toxins will last with the plant even in the hay curing process, but levels can decrease if forages are made as silage. The goals in preventing Cress Leaf Groundsel poisoning on the farm are to prevent growth in the fall and seed production in the spring. Fall applications of 2-4-D glyphosate have been very effective in row crop production and roundup-ready alfalfa production. In grass pastures dicamba and 2-4-D mixes can be very effective, but clovers will be killed also. Other products such as Grazeon Next can be effective at the early stages and not affect clover as badly as other products. As always, good grazing practices and strong stand establishment are critical in preventing Cress leaf groundsel growth in pastures and forage fields.

