

# Common Groundsel

Senecio Vulgaris

Family; Asteraceae

**Common Names:** old-man-in-the-Spring

**Species Affected:** Horses, Cows, Llamas, and Alpacas

**Toxin:** Alkaloids/pyrrolizidine alkaloids

**Description:** Annual growing a half ft tall to 3 ft tall. Leaves are alternate, deeply toothed margins, have short to no stalks, basal leaves usually purplish on the under side. Flower-heads of yellow disk flowers are black tipped, tufted seeds are spread by wind.

**Growing Locations:** Common in roadsides, fields, hillsides, and pastures primarily in the PNW.

**Most Toxic When:** Spring/early summer due to its intolerance to hot weather. However, groundsel is not palatable, and toxicity most likely occurs from contaminated hay consumption.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Weight loss, anemia, neurological signs in equines (walking disease), photosensitization, irreversible and progressive liver damage and impaired liver function, effects are cumulative and death can occur in weeks to months, after onset of symptoms, recovery is unlikely.

**Preventative Measures:**

*Mechanical– Pulling, shallow tilling or hoeing in spring before seed set and in fall, removing all dead plants as their seeds can still mature.*

*Chemical– 2, 4-D, clopyralid, and other similar auxinic herbicides can be effective, please check the PNW weed management handbook for further chemical control recommendations.*



Photo Credits: Wa State Noxious Weed Control Board