

Goatsrue Fact Sheet

Galega officinalis

Fabaceae Family



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Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers.** The flowers are pea-like and white to bluish lilac to reddish purple. They are found at the end of stems or in leaf axils.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Seeds are bean-shaped and dull yellow in color. Seeds grow in narrow pods, with 1-9 seeds per pod. A single plant can produce up to 15,000 pods.
- ❸ **Leaves:** The leaves are alternate and compound with a terminal leaflet and 6 to 10 pairs of leaflets.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** Goatsrue flowers from June until the fall frost.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Goatsrue sprouts in early spring and begins to produce flowers and fruits from mid-summer through fall. The seeds contained in these fruits can then remain viable in the soil for up to 10 years.

Impacts:

- Goatsrue contains a toxic alkaloid that in large concentrations can be fatal to humans and many herbivores, including all livestock.
- Spreading quickly through riparian and similar areas, Goatsrue forms monocultures and greatly reduces biodiversity, displacing native and beneficial plants and reducing resources for wetland wildlife.
- Goatsrue can easily contaminate alfalfa fields as its seeds are very similar in shape and size to those of alfalfa.

Control:

- For small infestations, shallow cultivation, mowing, clipping, and cutting are not recommended. The plant will flower and produce seed even when cut short.
- Grazing is not a control option, as Goatsrue is very toxic to livestock. Burning is not a viable method either, as fire stimulates root sprouting.
- There are currently no known biological control agents for Goatsrue.
- Selective herbicides such as 2,4-D/Dicamba are effective in controlling Goatsrue. Treatment is most effective when done before flowering for 2 to 3 consecutive years.



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*Please visit our website for references sourcing this information.



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