

Oxeye Daisy

The oxeye daisy is a beautiful flower, one that is both loved and hated. It is a plague on pastures and crop fields crowding out other plants on many rangelands. In some habitats it is an invasive species forming dense colonies displacing native plants and modifying existing communities. Wildlife and cattle avoid grazing and walking in infested areas since the plant irritates their noses, mouths, and legs. Very few animals eat it preferring to eat more desirable and palatable species first, which reduces competition for oxeye daisy allowing it to crowd out other plants. With the loss of desirable forage, oxeye daisy fills in, decreasing the land's carrying capacity and reducing wildlife habitat. Oxeye daisy is a host for several viral diseases affecting crops.



This perennial plant, introduced as an ornamental, is 1-3' tall and little branched. The central stem is glabrous to slightly hairy and often angular or furrowed. A small tuft of basal leaves develops at the base of the plant, while alternate leaves occur sparingly along the central stem. These leaves are up to 5" long and ¾" across, becoming smaller as they ascend the stem. The basal and lower leaves are often oblanceolate with slender petioles, while the middle to upper leaves are more oblong and often clasp the stem. Their margins are coarsely dentate, and some of the alternate leaves are often pinnatifid toward the base. The upper and lower surface of each leaf is hairless.



The central stem terminates in a single flowerhead on a long stalk that is nearly naked. At the base of the flowerhead, are several series of green floral bracts with margins that are brown and membranous. The blooming occurs during early to mid-summer and lasts about 1½ months. The root system is densely fibrous and forms offsets from short rhizomes.



Mechanical Control: Hoe or hand-pull seedlings and young plants for effective control of small patches and stands. This is most effective when done before oxeye daisy flowers and seed is dispersed. Mowing oxeye daisy will not eradicate the weed, but it limits the spread of seed, when timed properly.

Cultural Control: Re-establishment of desirable vegetation is needed in order to successfully manage oxeye daisy. Perennial grasses are effective competitors, particularly tall species that shade oxeye daisy, making it a weaker plant. Light grazing encourages growth of grasses and keeps pastures and rangeland vigorous. Overgrazing an area reduces competition and encourages oxeye daisy recruitment. Grazing sheep or goats over many years is effective, and probably most effective in combination with an integrated herbicide and replanting regimen.

Chemical control can be difficult as some studies show daisies are resistant to many herbicides. However, there are several species of Oxeye Daisy which may correlate to the differences in control.

County Impact- the District has been actively treating a few sites on the Big Horn Mountains through a cooperative agreement with the Forest Service. While we have gotten control on an annual basis and kept the infestations from spreading, it has proven resilient. We have not seen it escape into range.

Few scattered plants remain from what
Was a dense stand



Isolated patch

