

What is Ragweed?

Ragweeds (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* and other species) are plants from N America that have been introduced to Europe and other regions of the world and have partly become established. Ragweed is monoecious with male and female inflorescences on the same plant. They are wind pollinated and flower in late summer and autumn. In Europe the plant is common in the Pannonian Basin, the Balkans, N Italy and SE France. In other countries like Austria and Germany, the plant is still spreading and likely to become more widespread in the near future.

Why worry?

All ragweed species produce large amounts of pollen that is highly allergenic and can result in severe reactions like asthma. Due to the late flowering, ragweed makes seasonal allergic patients suffer longer in the season.

Common ragweed (*A. artemisiifolia*) is also a bad agricultural weed that reduces yield in many crops and is difficult to control.



Ragweed seeds can be a contaminant of bird seed

The International Ragweed Society

Scientists concerned with the ongoing spread of ragweed in Europe and with the large damages this causes have founded the Society in 2009 in order to combine efforts to

- Inform about the plant and its negative impacts,
- Enhance collaboration, research, and development of measures,
- Efficiently fight the plant.

The IRS regularly organises scientific conferences on all aspects of ragweed research. In 2011 the IRS has declared the first Saturday of the summer as the International Ragweed Day. Activities on and around this day are organised individually in many countries in order to raise public awareness about the plant, the problems it causes and potential measures to prevent further spread and reduce existing populations.



Ragweed as a weed in maize

What do we know?

Because of the large negative impacts it causes, ragweed has been studied intensively by scientists. Research has focused on the biology, the distribution of the plant and its pollen, on the allergy it causes, on other impacts and on methods to efficiently reduce its spread.

What can you do?

If you spot common ragweed plants in your area you can easily pull them out and throw them in the garbage bin. As some people show skin irritations after contact with the plant it is best to wear gloves. When the plants are already in flower beware not to inhale pollen.

Larger populations should be reported to the local authorities so that official control measures can be applied.



Typical leaves in young plant

The International Ragweed Day in your area:

e.g.: Announcing local activities with meeting point, date and time.



Ragweed can be confused with mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*). Note the white-grey undersides of mugwort (lower row) vs. the green undersides of ragweed leaves.

Further Information:

International Ragweed Society
<http://www.internationalragweedsociety.org/>

COST Action SMARTER (Sustainable management of *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* in Europe):
ragweed.eu

Research on methods to control ragweed:
<http://www.halt-ambrosia.de/>



Male flower head

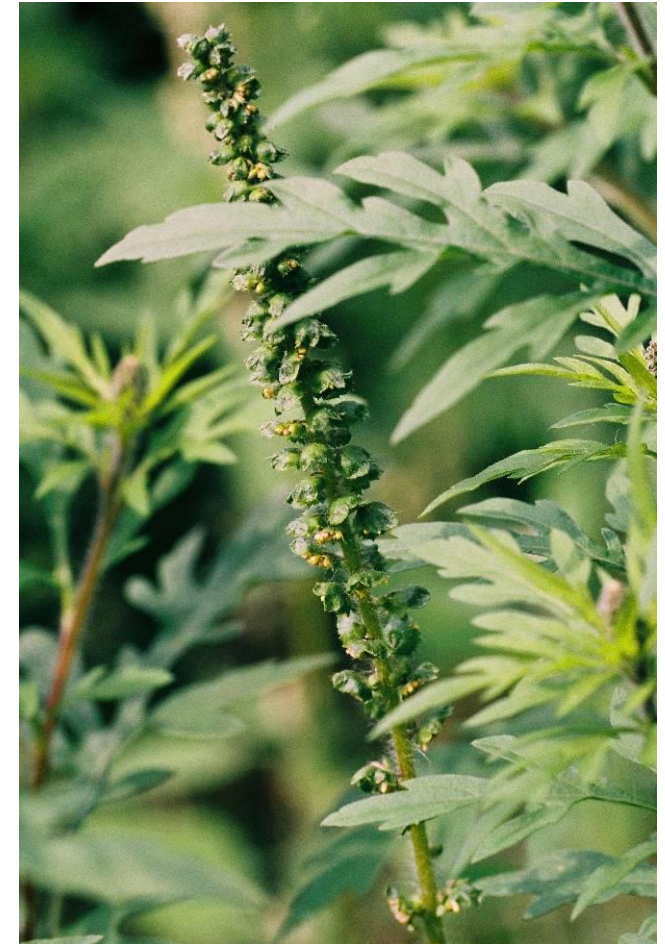
Infolyer International Ragweed Day

Text /Layout:
International Ragweed Society
Uwe Starfinger
Pictures: M. Bonini, U. Starfinger

May 2015



International Ragweed Society



International Ragweed Day

27th June 2015