

WHAT ARE RAGWEED?

Ragweeds (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* L. and other *Ambrosia* species) are plants from America that have **been introduced into Europe** and have partly become established.

Ragweeds are monoecious with male and female inflorescences on the same plant. They are wind pollinated and **flower in late summer and autumn**. In Europe, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* is common in the Pannonian Basin, the Balkans, Italy and France. In other countries like Austria and Germany, the plant is still spreading and likely to become more widespread in the near future.

Measures analysis of ragweed pollens reveals that the plant is present along the 45th parallel either in North America or Europe.

THE INTERNATIONAL RAGWEED SOCIETY

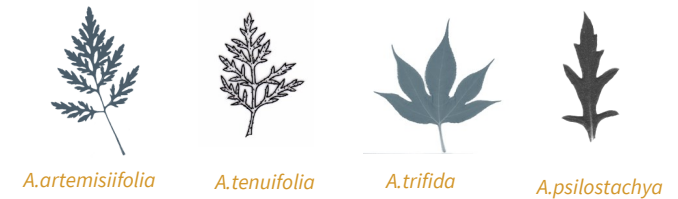
Scientists concerned with the ongoing spread of ragweeds in Europe and with the large damages these cause founded this Society in 2009 in order to combine efforts to:

- Inform about the plant and its negative impacts,
- Enhance collaboration, research, and development of measures, promote an efficiently control against the plant.

WHY WORRY?

Mainly common ragweed produces 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.



Typical leaves in young plant of common ragweed
(*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* L.)

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.

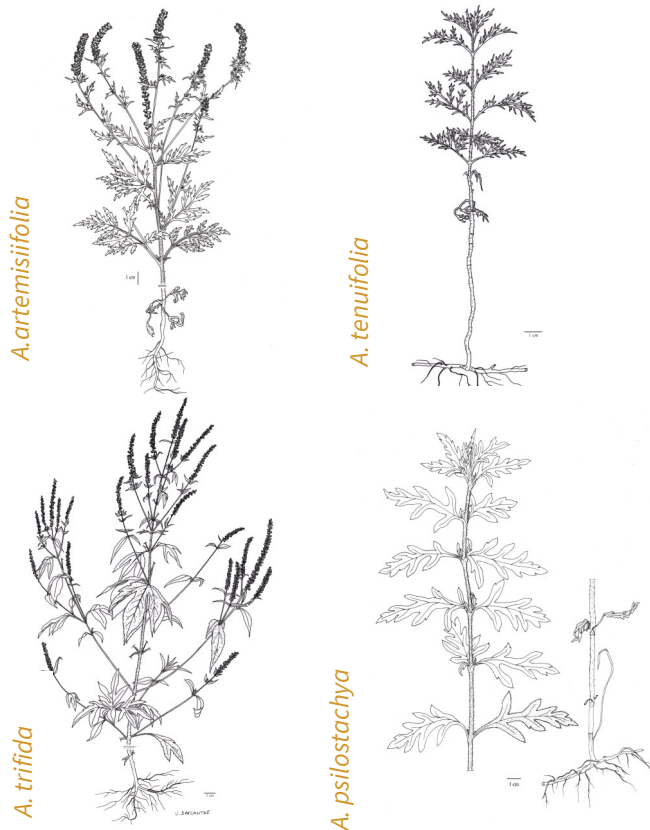
WHAT YOU CAN DO?

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.

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.



Is this ragweed or mugwort?

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



On the picture below, you can see **mugwort on the left** and **common ragweed on the right**.



FURTHER INFORMATIONS

- International Ragweed Society
www.internationalragweedsociety.org
- COST Action SMARTER - Sustainable management of *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* in Europe
ragweed.eu
- Observatoire des ambrosies
www.ambrosie.info
- Ambrosia
www.ambrosia.ch
- Réseau National de surveillance aérobiologique (RNSA)
www.pollens.fr



Photos : M. Bonini, U. Stalmer, Observatoire des ambrosies
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Female and male flower head of common ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* L.)

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INTERNATIONAL RAGWEED DAY

20TH JUNE 2020