

# Common groundsel

*Senecio vulgaris* L

Sunflower Family

## Key identifying traits

- ❑ Numerous small heads of yellow disk flowers
- ❑ The flower bracts are black-tipped
- ❑ Leaves are oblong, alternate & deeply lobed; basal leaves are usually purplish underneath, 1-4" long
- ❑ The stem of the plant is hollow
- ❑ Seeds are spindle shaped and tan having a "parachute" similar to the dandelion
- ❑ Entire plant is hairless-distinguishing it from other groundsel



seedling

## Biology and ecology

- Annual, winter annual or (rarely) biennial, reproducing by seed only
- One plant can produce as many as 1,000,000 seeds during one growing season
- Groundsel is a native of Europe
- Toxic primarily to cattle and horses; sheep have a much higher tolerance
- It has been known to show herbicide resistance
- It can germinate in a wide range of temperatures and starts blooming early in the season



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## Control

*Prevention* - Do not let weeds produce seed, do not buy contaminated feed or seed

*Biological* - Larvae of the cinnabar moth will eat Groundsel but are only present in June through August, research is being done on a rust fungus

*Cultural* - Cultivation kills plants and effective if done before going to seed

*Mechanical* - Cutting will help if done often and before any seed is produced

*Chemical* - Several effective but may require repeat treatments; be sure to use herbicides with different mode of action every few years



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*Where found* - No known large infestations in Stevens County to date, but may be found along roadsides, parking lots, gardens and waste areas.