

Dyer's Woad

Identification:

Dyer's woad may be a winter annual, biennial, or a short-lived perennial. Heights of one to four feet are common. A thick tap root may penetrate to five feet deep. The leaves are blue-green with a whitish midrib. The stems are branched toward their tips. The bright yellow flowers bloom and are highly visible in late spring. Club shaped seed pods each produce a single seed. As the fruits mature they turn from green to dark brown or nearly black.



Habitat:



Dyer's woad was introduced from Europe for production of textile dyes. It thrives in waste areas, gravel pits, road sides, pastures, field edges, and disturbed soils. It will also establish in rocky soils with minimum water holding capacity.

Dyers woad reproduces by seed, each plant can produce from 350 to 500 seeds, and some plants produce as many as 10,000 seeds.

Control:

Hand pulling is the recommended mechanical control option - after the plant bolts, and before seed production. This is considered the only practical control method of hard to reach, or difficult terrain. An active mowing program will control orchard populations of dyers woad.

For mechanical or cultural control In dryland alfalfa fields, dyers woad can be cultivated twice a year – once in the spring time before seed production, and again in late fall for the late germinating plants. This should keep the population manageable.

Experiments are under way to use rust as a biological control. Rust infected plants have a curley puckered look and are usually smaller than surrounding woad plants. Rust is located under the leaf surface and appears as small reddish-brown spots.

Chemical control. Contact Utah State University or your local county weed supervisor for more information.