

Please call 1-866-invader if you suspect you have found this species

Goatsrue
Galega officinalis

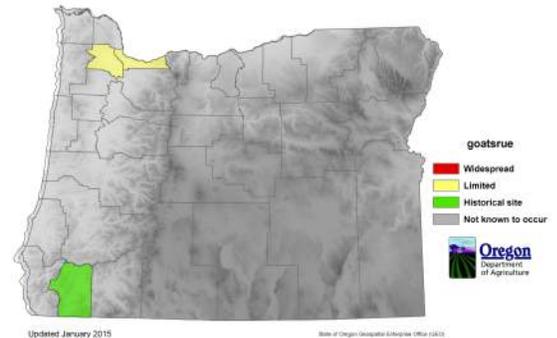
Other common names: American garden rue, catgut, devil's shoestring, rabbit-pea, horey turkey peas, Virginia pea, Virginia tephrosia, professor

USDA symbol: GAOF
ODA rating: A and T



Introduction: Goatsrue is a federally listed noxious weed. A member of the legume family. It was introduced into Utah in 1891 as a potential forage crop. Escaping cultivation, it now occupies in excess of 60 square miles in Cache, County, Utah. Within this area, goatsrue infests cropland, fence lines, pastures, roadsides, waterways, and wet, marshy areas. In Oregon it is known from an herbal planting located near Grants Pass and from a roadside infestation in the Portland area.

Distribution in Oregon: Goatsrue was found in a crop in Grant's Pass in 2007 and eradicated. A recent discovery in the Portland area is targeted for eradication.



Description: Goatsrue is a deep-rooted perennial legume, regrowing each year from a crown and taproot. Plants may have up to 20 hollow stems reaching 2 to 6 feet tall by late summer. The first seedling leaves are large, oval and dark green while mature leaves are alternate, odd-pinnate with 6 to 10 pairs of leaflets. The plant's stems and leaves contain a poisonous alkaloid, galegin, which renders the plant unpalatable to most livestock, and lethal in large quantities. The white and bluish to purplish pea-like blossoms are borne in terminal or axially racemes. Each blossom produces a straight, narrow, smooth pod, with 1 to 9 seeds per pod. A single plant may produce upwards of 15,000 pods. Goatsrue seeds are bean-shaped, dull yellow in color, and about 2 1/2 times the size of alfalfa seeds. Seeds drop on the ground when mature and may be spread by water, equipment, or animals. Seeds typically remain dormant until scarified and may remain viable for 10 years.

Impacts: Goatsrue is toxic to all ruminant animals, especially sheep. Livestock and wildlife losses would be expected to increase especially during dry years if animals graze in infested areas. Goatsrue replaces desirable vegetation in pastures and particularly along stream banks and irrigation canals. Some of the most productive lowland pastures, irrigated fields and moist meadows would be susceptible to invasion. Additional costs associated with goat's rue involve control or eradication programs. Large investments in herbicide control have not yielded satisfactory results in several states. Alfalfa seed crops may become contaminated with goat's rue seed. The seed size is larger than alfalfa seed but shape and coat are similar. A small amount of contaminant could serve to inoculate newly planted alfalfa fields causing economic harm to producers.

Biological controls: Biological control agents are not used on "A" listed weeds in Oregon.

