

## A Northern Nevada Homeowner's Guide to Identifying and Managing Western Salsify

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**Other common names:** Yellow salsify, western goat's beard, yellow goat's beard, wild oysterplant

**Scientific name:** *Tragopogon dubius*

**Family:** Asteraceae

**Description:** This grass-like plant is easily recognized by the large 2- to 4-inch-diameter puffball that develops from the yellow flowers. Plants stay in the ground-hugging rosette form until flowering occurs.

**Leaves:** Long, narrow and grasslike, but thicker than grass blades. Leaves ooze a milky sap when broken.

**Stems:** Flowering stems are produced in the second year of growth. The stem is enlarged and hollow next to the flower. Stems also ooze a milky sap when broken.

**Flowers:** Single yellow flowers appear at the end of long stalks. Long pointed bracts extend below the petals, giving a starry look to the flower.

**Roots:** Grows a thick, branched taproot; oozes a milky sap when broken.

**Native to:** Europe

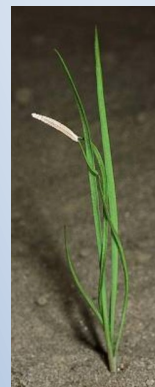
**Where it grows:** Roadsides, vacant lots, pastures and disturbed areas

**Life cycle:** Biennial (lives two years)

**Reproduction:** Reproduces by seed carried on the wind



Typical plant growing in a disturbed site.



The seedling appears grass-like.

(Top photo by W. Hanson Mazet,  
bottom photo by J. DiTomaso, UC Davis)

**Control methods:** As with all biennials, preventing seed production is essential. Control before seed heads are produced.

**Mechanical:** Cultivation is successful in controlling this plant. Dig, hoe or pull young plants. Plants pull easily. Mow when flowers first appear and repeat mowing as needed.

**Cultural:** Plant desirable vegetation to help suppress it.

**Biological:** None commercially available.

**Chemical:** Try broadleaf selective herbicides such as 2,4-D + dicamba on young plants. Dicamba can persist for several months and may damage desirable plants in the area treated. Glyphosate can also be used on young plants but is nonselective and damages both grasses and broadleaf plants. Pre-emergence herbicides can be used to manage existing seed banks.

## References:

- DiTomaso, J.M. and E.A. Healy. 2007. Weeds of California and Other Western States. University of California Publication 3488.
- Goat's beard or western salsify. Virginia Tech Weed Identification Guide, [http://www.ppws.vt.edu/scott/weed\\_id/trodm.htm](http://www.ppws.vt.edu/scott/weed_id/trodm.htm).
- Western salsify. Ohio perennial and biennial weed guide, <http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/weedguide/singlerecord.asp?id=1030>.
- Whitson, Tom D. (editor). 2002. Weeds of the West. University of Wyoming, Jackson, Wyoming.
- USDA-NRCS Plants Database. 2011. PLANTS profile for *Tragopogon dubius*, <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=TRDU>



The narrow, grass-like leaves are wider at the base, and can be up to 12 inches long.

(Photo by S. Donaldson)



The bright-yellow flowers open early in the day and close by noon.

(Photo by W. Hanson Mazet)



The flower develops into a large, highly visible puff ball.

(Photo by W. Hanson Mazet)