

sneezewort

Achillea ptarmica L.

Synonyms: none

Other common names: Russian daisy, sneezeweed

Family: Asteraceae

Invasiveness Rank: 46 The invasiveness rank is calculated based on a species' ecological impacts, biological attributes, distribution, and response to control measures. The ranks are scaled from 0 to 100, with 0 representing a plant that poses no threat to native ecosystems and 100 representing a plant that poses a major threat to native ecosystems.

Description

Sneezewort is a rhizomatous, perennial plant that grows 15 to 91 cm tall. Stems are erect, simple to highly branched, and hairy (villous-tomentose). Leaves are 1 to 5 cm long and nearly smooth to sharply toothed at the margins. Flower heads are generally numerous and borne in flat-topped clusters. Involucral bracts have dark to pale margins. Rays are 3 to 5 mm long and usually white. Seeds are 1 to 2 mm long.



Achillea ptarmica L. Photo by R. Old.

Similar species: This is the only *Achillea* species in Alaska with large ray flowers (3 to 5 mm in diameter) and without divided leaves.

Ecological Impact

Impact on community composition, structure, and interactions: The flowers are pollinated by bees and flies (Plants for a future 2002). Sneezewort hybridizes freely with other members of its genus (Plants for a Future 2002, Hurteau and Briggs 2003). It may be a host for several aphid species, nematodes, and a number of viruses and fungi (MacLachlan et al. 1996).

Impact on ecosystem processes: The impacts of sneezewort on ecosystem processes are unknown.

Biology and Invasive Potential

Reproductive potential: Sneezewort reproduces sexually by seeds and vegetatively from underground runners.

Role of disturbance in establishment: Unknown.

Potential for long-distance dispersal: Seeds lack pappi and are not dispersed long distances.

Potential to be spread by human activity: Sneezewort is cultivated as an ornamental plant, and it sometimes escapes cultivation (Welsh 1974). Numerous ornamental cultivars are readily available from commercial sources.

Germination requirements: Germination of *Achillea* species is improved by exposure to light (MacLachlan et al. 1996). This suggests that the germination of seeds in established vegetation is unlikely.

Growth requirements: Sneezewort can grow in neutral to slightly acidic soil with any texture, including sand, loam, and clay. It can grow in nutrient-poor soil and is often associated with moist, well-drained soil. This plant is not shade tolerant (MacLachlan et al. 1996, Plants for a Future 2002).

Congeneric weeds: Fernleaf yarrow (*A. filipendulina*) is an introduced, but not weedy, species (J. Riley – pers. com., USDA 2006).

Legal Listings

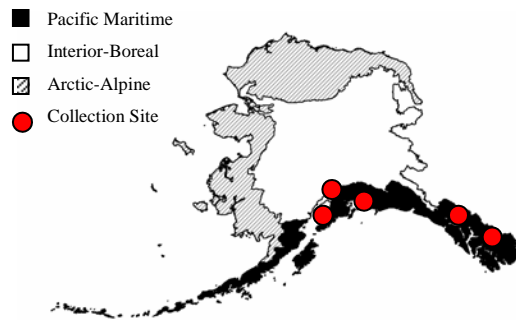
- Has not been declared noxious
- Listed noxious in Alaska
- Listed noxious by other states
- Federal noxious weed
- Listed noxious in Canada or other countries

Distribution and abundance

Sneezewort, in its native range, occupies wet meadows, marshes, and stream banks (Gubanov et al. 1995).

Native and current distribution: Sneezewort is native to Europe, but it has naturalized in North America (USDA, ARS 2005). Occurrences have been documented in Tasmania (Csurhes and Edwards 1998). Sneezewort was introduced into Norway and has spread quickly to the northern province of Finnmark, growing in meadows and forest edges (Lid and Lid 1994). Sneezewort has been documented from the Pacific Maritime and

Interior-Boreal ecogeographic regions of Alaska (Hultén 1968, AKEPIC 2010, UAM 2010).



Distribution of sneezewort in Alaska

Management

Management strategies have not been developed for sneezewort.

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