

# Bitter weed

Prohibited invasive plant

**Look. Report. Protect. 13 25 23**



- It is illegal to keep, cultivate, transport or sell bitter weed in Queensland.
- Grows up to 60 cm high with daisy-like yellow flowers.
- Can be poisonous to livestock.
- Plants produce seeds within eight weeks after germination.
- Not known to be established outside the Mt Tarampa and Somerset area.
- Early detection and reporting helps protect Queensland's natural environment.

## Description

Bitter weed (*Helenium amarum*) is a summer growing annual herb up to 60 cm high, native to North and Central America. The leaves are narrow, less than 2 mm wide and less than 3 cm long, sometimes appearing thread-like. Leaves are numerous, arranged alternately along the stems. Flowers are yellow, daisy-like and 2 cm across with eight wedge-shaped yellow rays that each have three lobed tips. Seeds are 1 mm long, reddish brown, hairy along the edges and wedge-shaped.

Bitter weed can be compact and bushy under favourable conditions. It can also remain unnoticed when competing with other plants, producing a single flower on plants as small as 5 cm high.

## Biosecurity risk

Bitter weed is a prohibited invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Prohibited species must be reported immediately to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

Bitter weed is toxic when consumed by livestock, including sheep, cattle and horses. It causes weakness, diarrhoea and vomiting. When ingested by dairy cattle, it imparts a bitter taste to their milk, rendering it undrinkable.

## What should I do?

If you think you have seen bitter weed, report it immediately to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or scan the QR code to access our reporting web page. Until an authorised officer contacts you, please take reasonable and practical steps to prevent bitter weed from spreading.

## More information

Contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit [biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://biosecurity.qld.gov.au).



# Similar looking species to bitter weed

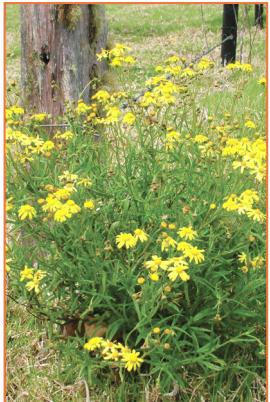
## Fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*)

### A restricted invasive plant

- An erect or sprawling annual herb between 20–50 cm high.
- Leaves are generally 2–6 cm long, alternate, dark green, with serrated margins.
- Flowers are bright yellow, daisy-like, with diameter of about 2 cm, producing up to 100 seeds each.
- Toxic to livestock, particularly cattle and horses, causing illness, slow growth and poor conditioning.

### Key feature different to bitter weed

Leaves are not needle like, flowers during autumn and winter.



## Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata L.*)

- Upright, annual to perennial herb up to 1 m high.
- Leaves mostly basal, deeply divided, lance shaped, up to 4–30 cm long, 10–20 mm wide, usually deeply divided into pointed lobes.
- Flowers are bright golden yellow, daisy-like, usually solitary, with petals and are on a long leafless stalk. Petals are markedly toothed at the ends.
- Flowers can be seen in summer.
- Cultivated as a garden ornamental now spread to disturbed areas.

### Key feature different to bitter weed

Tall, leaves not needle like, flowers larger than 2 cm with toothed petals.



## Dwarf marigold (*Schkuhria pinnata*)

- Annual herb that grows between 25–45 cm high.
- Numerous airy erect stems which grow more woody as it matures.
- Leaves are opposite and pinnate shape (thread like).
- Produces numerous small yellow flowers in spring.

### Key feature different to bitter weed

Flowers are smaller than 2 cm.



## Turnip weed (*Rapistrum rugosum (L.) All.*)

- Annual or biennial, mostly 15–60 cm high, often bristly.
- Prickles up to 12 mm long.
- Leaves to 25 cm long with usually three pairs of irregularly toothed lobes.
- Flowers are yellow, resemble those of broccoli and cabbage, from spring to summer.
- Plant has a turnip odour when crushed.
- Found in disturbed areas and roadsides.

### Key feature different to bitter weed

Leaves not needle like, flowers are not daisy shaped.

