

# DALMATIAN TOADFLAX and YELLOW TOADFLAX

(*Linaria genistifolia* ssp. *dalmatica* (L.) Maire & Petitm. and *Linaria vulgaris* Mill.)



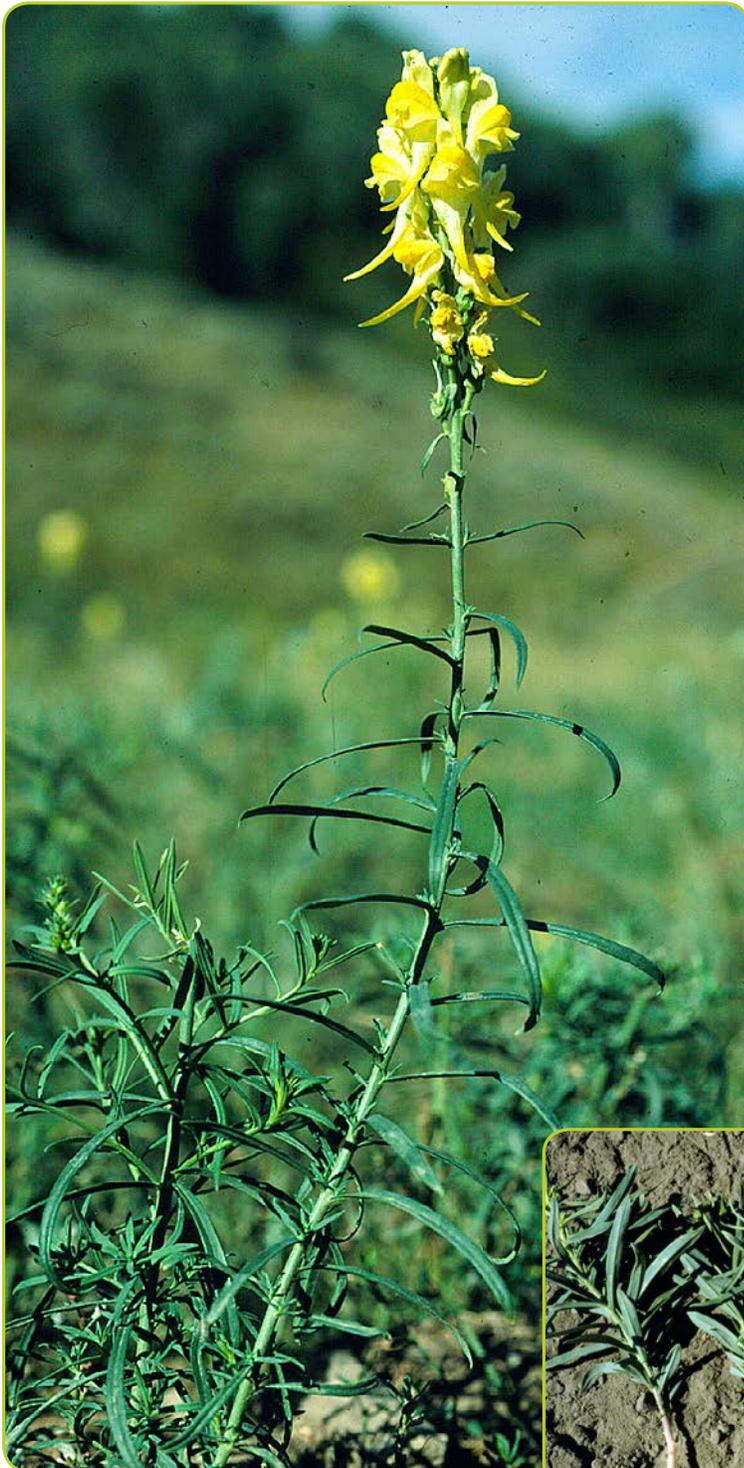
Dalmatian toadflax



Dalmatian toadflax has  
broad heart-shaped leaves



# DALMATIAN TOADFLAX and YELLOW TOADFLAX



Yellow toadflax



Yellow toadflax has narrow linear leaves



Yellow toadflax flowers have orange throats



# DALMATIAN TOADFLAX and YELLOW TOADFLAX

State Noxious Weed List:

Dalmatian toadflax: **Yes.**

Yellow toadflax: **Yes.**

Both Dalmatian and yellow toadflax are escaped perennial ornamental plants that were introduced in the mid-1800s. Dalmatian toadflax is native to the Mediterranean region, specifically the Dalmatian Coast of Croatia, while yellow toadflax is from Eurasia. Yellow toadflax first was recorded in North Dakota by H.L. Bolley from a collection made in Fargo and described as “most abundant in Barnes County” in the 1940s by O.A. Stevens. The first record of Dalmatian toadflax is from Walhalla in Pembina County in 1937 by Stevens.

The toadflaxes are most likely to be found along highways, railroad tracks and other transportation or communication lines, or anywhere livestock is brought into the state. Often the origins of an infested area can be traced back to an escape from an ornamental planting. Dalmatian toadflax has been reported only as small patches in a few counties, generally in the western part of North Dakota. However, yellow toadflax has been found in many counties across the state and is on the verge of becoming a major problem for land managers in North Dakota.

Identification and growth form:

Dalmatian and yellow toadflax are members of the snapdragon family and thus easily recognizable by the bright yellow flowers, which have swollen corolla tubes that flare into two “lips” with an orange throat (yellow toadflax) and long spur. The flowers are 1 to 1.5 inches long with many flowers on a raceme. Both species have an extensive creeping rhizomatous root system that spreads like leafy spurge. The most distinctive difference between the species is that Dalmatian toadflax has broad, heart-shaped leaves that clasp a woody stem, whereas yellow toadflax has narrow, linear leaves with a narrow stem.

The plants begin regrowth from the roots as soon as the soil warms in early spring. Toadflax flowers from late June through August in North Dakota and single plants may produce more than 500,000 seeds that are dispersed by wind, rain, wildlife, and movement of forage and livestock. The seed is disk-shaped, 0.08 inch in diameter and dark brown to black, and often have irregular papery wings. Seed dispersal begins a few weeks after flowering and continues into winter. The roots of a single plant can extend 10 feet and give rise to daughter plants every few inches.

Why are these plants a concern?

The toadflax species are aggressive and will displace forage in pastureland and native species in wildland. Yellow toadflax can be mildly poisonous to livestock that graze it. Although the toadflaxes may be slow to establish, once plants take root, control is very difficult since most herbicides are ineffective.

Dalmatian toadflax seedlings are relatively poor competitors with grass species, but once established, the weed can become extremely invasive, especially on dryland sites, disturbed areas and roadsides. Yellow toadflax is adapted to more moist sites than Dalmatian toadflax and often is found in pasture, meadows and ditches.

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## How do I control these plants?

Prevention is the best method to keep Dalmatian and yellow toadflax from invading North Dakota pasture, rangeland and wildlands. Herbicides can be effective but require repeated treatments at high rates.

**Chemical.** Tordon (picloram), Plateau (imazapic) and Telar (chlorsulfuron) will control Dalmatian toadflax when applied at maximum use rates during flowering or late fall. No herbicide is labeled for yellow toadflax control, but research has found that a combination treatment of Tordon plus Overdrive (dicamba plus diflufenzopyr) applied from mid-June through mid-September will reduce yellow toadflax infestations for a least two years. See the latest edition of the “North Dakota Weed Control Guide” for application rate and timing recommendations.

**Cultural.** The long-term use of proper stocking rates to maintain competitive forage species has helped reduce the spread of toadflax into grazing lands. Burning is not effective because soil temperatures do not get high enough to kill the roots. Burning even may have a detrimental effect and cause an increase in the number of stems due to reduced cover.

**Biological.** Several insects have been introduced for toadflax control. The stem-boring weevil *Mecinus janthiniformis* has been the most successful and can reduce Dalmatian toadflax stands relatively quickly. *M. janthiniformis* larvae mine in Dalmatian toadflax stems, which slowly causes the plants to wilt and die. Repeated attempts to establish *M. janthiniformis* on yellow toadflax in North Dakota have failed, likely because the larvae cannot survive in the much narrower diameter stem of yellow compared with Dalmatian toadflax. *Mecinus janthinus* is currently being evaluated for yellow toadflax control.