Coltsfoot

Tussilago farfara

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Asteraceae (daisy)

Also known as
Coughwort, dovedock, horse-hoof, clayweed, ginger root

Where is it originally from?
Europe and Asia

Photo: Trevor James

What does it look like?
Low-growing, mat-forming, summer-green perennial herb with stout rootstock and rhizomes. Shallowly-lobed kidney-shaped to round, or heart-shaped leaves (3-20 cm diameter) with finely toothed edges at the base of the plant are hairless above, woolly below, and on long hairy stalks. Erect flowering stem (5-30 cm tall) has 10 or more oval to triangular leaves (<1 cm long). Single yellow daisy-like flowers (6-10mm diameter) at top of stem (Oct) appear before leaves and are followed by hairy seed capsules (3-5 mm long). Dies back to rootstock over winter.

Photo: Manfred von Tippelskirch

Are there any similar species?
Winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) has pink-purple flowers and non-lobed leaves with large-toothed edges.

Why is it weedy?
Matures and grows quickly, and has fast spreading rhizomes and a persistent rootstock. Produces very many, very well dispersed seeds. Tolerates very wet to occasionally dry conditions, moderate to cool temperatures, semi-shade, and damage.

How does it spread?
Seed spread by wind, and rhizomes by soil and water movement.

What damage does it do?
Forms dense mats in damp, disturbed sites, excluding other species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Short tussock, wetland, and bare land.

Photo: Trevor James

What can I do to get rid of it?
If you are in the Cantebury region contact your regional council to determine the status of this species and responsibility for control.
1. Physical removal - Pull seedlings and dig out small patches. Ensure removal of all parts of the plant including roots and dispose of these at a refuse transfer station.
2. Cut and paste (all year round) - Cut the stem as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply either glyphosate gel (120g/L strength) or metsulfuron gel (10g/l strength).
3. Foliar Spray - Apply either glyphosate (360 g/L active ingredient at 20ml/L knapsack) plus organosilicone penetrant (2ml/L), to cover entire plant. Note: Glyphosate overspray will kill other (desirable) plants OR Apply Metsulfuron herbicide (600g/kg active ingredient at 0.5g/1L knapsack or 20g/100L gun and hose) plus organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L) Note: overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants and has residual activity in the soil which aids in killing below ground parts.
CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

What can I do to stop it coming back?
Rootstock and rhizomes resprout so follow up 3 monthly until eradicated. Densely replant where appropriate to prevent reseeding.