INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

Dyer's woad
(*Isatis tinctoria*)

Have You Seen This Plant?

Description

- Biennial to short lived perennial herb that is native to southeast Europe, North Africa, and Central Asia.
- Stem leaves are alternate, clasping, and the amount of hair and leaf width decreases as plant height increases.
- Stems may reach heights of 1.2 m but average 80 cm.
- Four-petaled flowers bloom in bright yellow clusters around the ends of long stems from late April to June.
- Leaves are blueish-green and have a cream-coloured midrib.
- Flattened teardrop-shaped fruits hang from short stalks, maturing from bright green to a dark purple-brown colour.
- Rosette leaves are stalked and elongated; leaves are 4 to 10 cm long with pale veins and wavy edges.
- Taproots are up to 1.5 m deep; lateral roots can extend 40 cm and are in the top 20-30 cm of soil.

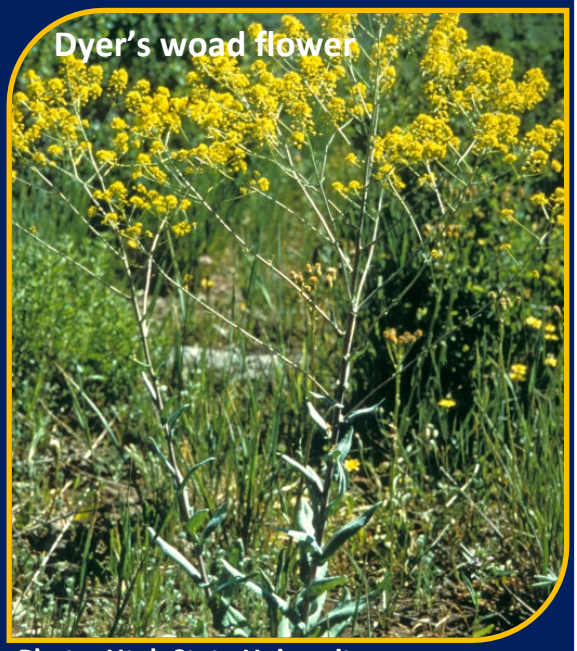

Dyer's woad flower

Photo: Utah State University

Primary Threats: Dyer's woad is capable of outcompeting native species in both disturbed and undisturbed areas including at-risk ecosystems. Not palatable to livestock, it can reduce available forage in rangelands.

Dyer's woad rosette

Photo: Joseph DiTomaso

Biology & Spread

- Plants produce 350 – 500 seeds on average with some plants producing up to 10,000 seeds.
- Seeds can remaining viable for up to eight years.
- Seed production and seed germination is suppressed until conditions are favourable, typically moisture dependent.
- Seeds transport readily in waterways, through contaminated hay and on the fur of passing animals.
- Vegetative regrowth may occur from taproots or root crown buds.

For more information:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species/priority-species/priority-plants

BRITISH COLUMBIA

January 2026

Dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*)

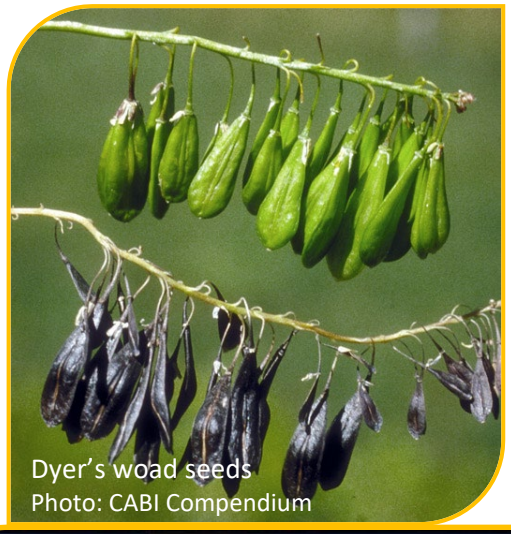
BC Distribution
Dyer's woad, January 2026

Habitat

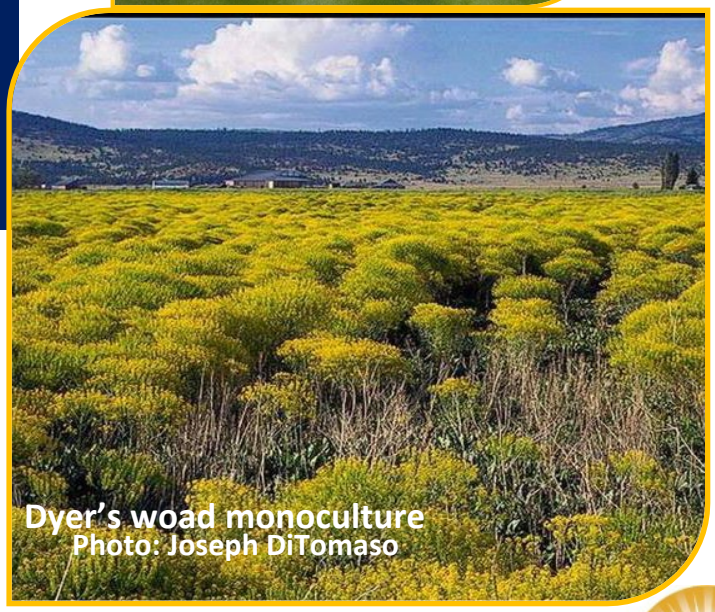
- Dyer's woad grows well on roadsides, rights-of-way, gravel pits, ditches, riparian zones, rangelands, pastures, and even forests. While it prefers sandy or gravel soil, dyer's woad will readily grow in rocky soils with little moisture retention. Sagebrush landscapes are particularly susceptible to infestation.

Distribution & Status

- No active sites occur in BC, but a single historic site is being monitored; does occur in Washington, Idaho, and Montana.
- Management goal is prevention and eradication.



Dyer's woad seeds
Photo: CABI Compendium



Dyer's woad monoculture
Photo: Joseph DiTomaso

Report Invasive Species

Download the App!

www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

What Can You Do?

- **REPORT** new sightings
- **Inspect** lands for presence
- **Check** all garden seed mixes
- **Inform** others of the risk of dyer's woad
- **Treat** invasive species before disturbing a site with digging, mowing, or machinery

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