

Common St. Johnswort

Hypericum perforatum L.

Alternate Names

Klamath weed

Description

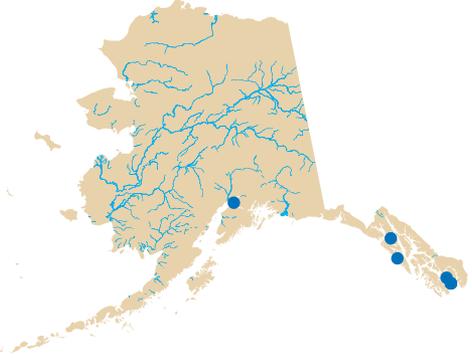
Common St. Johnswort is a perennial plant with numerous erect stems growing from a stout taproot. Leaves are opposite, up to 1 inch long, and lack stalks. Tiny transparent dots are visible when the leaves are held up to a bright light. Flowers have 5 bright yellow petals, each $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch long, with deep purple dots along the petal margins and showy yellow stamens with purple tips.

Similar Species

Many species of St. Johnswort are found in the United States, but none are native to Alaska.

Management

Tillage may be employed to eliminate common St. Johnswort, and biological control by beetles of the genus *Chrysolina* has also been successful. Application of herbicides is most effective before blossoms open, preferably on new seedlings just after germination.



UAF Cooperative Extension Service
photo by Jamie Snyder

Flower and fruits of common St. Johnswort.



XID Services photo by Richard Old

"Perforated" leaf of common St. Johnswort.

Family: Clusiaceae

Common St. Johnswort

Notes

Common St. Johnswort is used medicinally to relieve nervous disorders, but it also contains a phototoxin that causes sensitive persons to become susceptible to skin burns, especially after exposure to sunlight. The Latin species name *perforatum* means holes, which refers to the transparent dots on the leaves.



UAF Cooperative Extension Service photo by Jamie Snyder