

---

# Lowbush Blueberry Fact Sheet

---

## St. John's-wort

*Hypericum perforatum L.*

Other names: Goatweed, klamath weed, herb John, tipton weed, rosin-rose, amber

---

### Description

St. John's-wort is a herbaceous perennial weed which grows up to 80 cm in height. It reproduces from seed and horizontally spreading, underground stems known as rhizomes. The stems are upright and branched with a somewhat woody base. The leaves are not longer than 2.5 cm, have a smooth edge, are oppositely arranged along the stem, and appear to have many small holes when held up to light. Each yellow flower is about 2 cm across and appear in clusters at the end of the branches. The flowers, which form from June to August, are distinctive by the several black dots that appear along the margin of each petal. The seed pods which form in late summer have three parts and produce many small dark brown seeds.

### Economic Importance

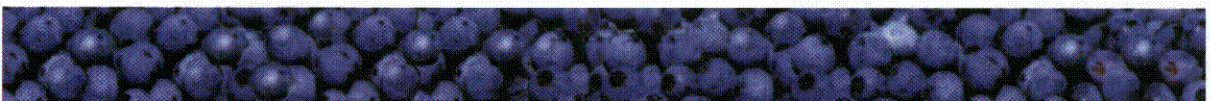
St. John's-wort is becoming an increasing problem in eastern Canada lowbush blueberry fields. It can out-compete lowbush blueberries for resources like space, moisture and sunlight. This crowding out of the blueberry plants can reduce yields and harvest efficiency. Control methods, such as spot sprays, can cause damage to blueberry plants under this weed. This reduces blueberry plant cover.

### Life Cycle

St. John's-wort is a perennial weed which spreads by seeds and rhizomes. The plant emerges in late spring and flowers from June to August. Seed pods are formed in the late summer and seeds are released back into the field. New shoots can grow from the vegetative buds on the rhizomes if the plant is damaged by mowing or pulling.



St. John's-wort.



# Control Strategy

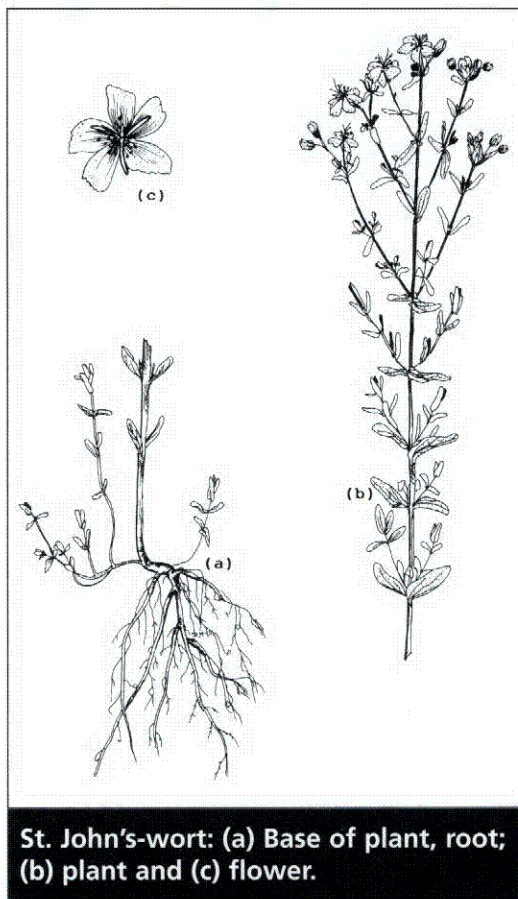
St. John's-wort is difficult to control with hexazinone (Velpar™/Pronone™). Pulling and mowing results in regrowth from remaining vegetative buds on the rhizomes still in the soil. Biological control by two species of the Chrysolina beetle (*Chrysolina quadragemina* and *C. hypoerici*) has been effective in controlling St. John's-wort populations, however, they are incompatible with insecticides used in heavily managed fields. The beetles feed on St. John's-wort exclusively in the early summer and fall. A fungus, *Colletotrichum gleosporoides*, generally maintains St. John's-wort at low levels. Directed herbicide applications have given moderate control, however, there is a trade-off with some crop damage.

Prepared by:  
Rick Hoeg - NSDAM  
Peter Burgess - NSAC

Sketch by:  
Debra Holms-Sampson

April 2000

Partial funding for this factsheet was provided by Agricultural and Agri-Food Canada through Agri-Futures, Nova Scotia's Adaptation Council.



St. John's-wort: (a) Base of plant, root; (b) plant and (c) flower.

