

PEST ALERT

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Gus R. Douglass, Commissioner

Inula (British Yellowhead; Meadow Fleabane)

Inula britannica L.



Inula growing with Hostas (Minnesota Dept. of Ag.; P. Dziuk).



Close-up of Inula flower heads (Minnesota Dept. of Ag.; P. Dziuk).



Close-up view of Inula stem and leaves (Michigan State University; R. Richardson).

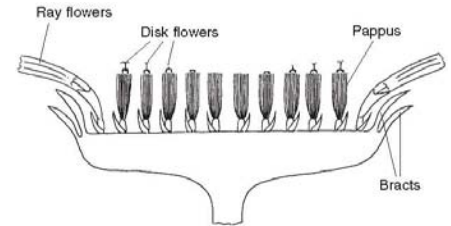


Whole Inula plant (Michigan State University; R. Richardson).

Inula, *Inula britannica* L. (Asteraceae; sunflower family), is native to Europe and temperate Asia and is becoming a major weed in Michigan nurseries. It was introduced to the United States in the early 1900s. The first specimen was collected in 1915 in Nassau County, NY (on Long Island). About 1990 *Inula* was found in Michigan nurseries where it has exhibited invasive tendencies. Research determined that *Inula* root material had been intertwined with the roots of *Hostas* imported from the Netherlands. *Inula* is considered a noxious weed in the Netherlands and current surveys will be used to decide if it warrants listing as a Federal Noxious Weed in the U.S.

Description

Inula is an upright biennial herb. *Inula* stems are usually very hairy and 6 to 30 inches tall. Flower heads are bright yellow, daisy- or sunflower-like, about 1 inch across, and occur alone or in clusters of 2 or 3. The bracts surrounding the flower head are linear, in 2 rows with little overlap, soft and green. The ray flowers (outer ring of "petals") are long and narrow, usually twice as long as the surrounding bracts. Its leaves are alternate along the stem, slightly hairy on top, very hairy on bottom, and have smooth or finely toothed margins (edges). The leaves are 1½ to 6 inches long and ½ to 1 inch wide. Upper leaves appear to clasp the stem while lower leaves are usually on short stalks. Fruits are light brown and have feather-like hairs for wind dispersal.



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Life History

Inula is a biennial (or possibly perennial) herb that tends to grow in clumps with one "mother" plant surrounded by 8 to 10 "satellite" plants. It flowers in July and August, but will produce flowers year-round in greenhouses. *Inula* reproduces by seed and fragments of rhizomes or roots.

Ecology/Habitat

Inula is typically found in moist habitats including river and stream banks, marshes, ditches, wet grasslands and wet woods. Due to its introduction with *Hostas*, *Inula* may be found in nurseries and nursery dealers where *Hostas* are sold as well as *Hosta* beds.

Similar Plants

There are many closely related plants that *Inula* might be confused with. Many of the distinguishing features are in the flowers.

For more information or to report suspected infestations, contact:

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