

Dyer's woad  
(*Isatis tinctoria*)

Currently in Montana, noxious weed infest about 8.2 million acres. Many of these state listed noxious weeds were brought to America as ornamentals for gardens, medicinal purposes, by accident in discarded soil from a ship's ballast, or unintentionally in bags of seed brought from other parts of the world. Whatever the cause of introduction non-native plant species have found their way onto Montana's state listed noxious weed list.

Dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) is native to central Asia, eastern Siberia, and western Asia. The dyer's woad plant produces a blue substance that was used for centuries as a form of dye for pottery, textiles, and body paint. Dyer's woad was introduced into North America during the colonial period for its use as a dye before indigo dye was available. Dyer's woad escaped cultivation and spread to the West when its seeds was mixed in with alfalfa seed, and it can still be seen in today's landscapes. Dyer's woad does not currently occur in Montana, however it is prevalent in several surrounding states and Montana has had several small infestations that have been eradicated immediately once found. Dyer's woad tends to inhabit dry, rocky soils commonly found on hillsides and can usually be found in dry pastures, uncultivated fields, roadsides, waste areas, forest and rangelands. This plant is a biennial that must overwinter before it produces seed. After the plant makes seed, it dies. Dyer's woad has bluish-green alternate, lanceolate leaves that are covered with fine hairs. Leaves have a cream colored mid-vein; which is especially noticeable on the rosettes. This plant can grow up to 4' in height and the taproot can reach depths of up to 5'. Dyer's woad grows very quickly and can produce up to 20 stems that are capable of setting seed very quickly. The flowers of dyers' woad are yellow with four petals. Flowers are found in clusters at the ends of the branch tips. Then dyer's woad sets seeds, it produces large, blackish-blue teardrop-shaped seed pods that hang from stems.

Please take a few moments to learn about noxious weeds. If noxious weeds are not currently a problem in your area, they may be in the near future. For more information about Montana's state listed noxious weeds, regulated plants, or weed species listed on your county weed list, please contact your local county weed district (can list weed district name here... ex: Lewis & Clark County Weed District) at \_(406)\_(Phone number)\_. Or you can contact the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-5600.