

Dandelion, dock and fathen

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Summary

Widespread perennial.

Identification

Has a taproot and broad leaves with very jagged edges. Produces a bright yellow flower that has a thick hollow unbranched stem.

Characteristics

Its roots have a strong reproductive ability. Pieces of root from as deep as 20 cm can grow into new plants, giving it the capacity to multiply as a result of cultivation. Can thrive in cattle pasture but is kept in check under sheep grazing.



Dock (broad-leaved) (*Rumex obtusifolius*)

Summary

Widespread - most plentiful on wet soils. Perennial.

Identification

Has large broad leaves and a taproot. Produces buds that turn a reddish colour.

Characteristics

Seeds are long-lived, so large banks of seed can build up in the soil. When dock-infested paddocks are cultivated, they are soon reinfested, both from seedlings and regrowth of roots. Sheep eat docks, but cattle and horses avoid them.



Fathen (*Chenopodium album*)

Summary

Spring/summer weed in all districts. Annual.

Identification

The leaves of many seedlings are purple underneath. The first two leaves are horizontal and narrow, but the true leaves are broad. Has an upright central stem. Its seeds ripen and fall while leaves are still green.

Characteristics

Germinates in spring and dies with frosts in autumn. Grows aggressively in dry conditions. Can grow densely in spring sown pasture. Seeds last for 60 years in the soil and can germinate with little rain. Stock can eat it without serious harm but may suffer scouring and ill-thrift.

