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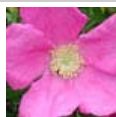
## Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

### Catalog of Species Search Results

### *Tussilago farfara* (Coltsfoot )



[:: Catalog of Species Search](#)



[Common Name\(s\)](#) | [Full Scientific Name](#) | [Family Name Common](#) | [Family Scientific Name](#) | [Images](#) | [Synonyms](#) | [Description](#) | [Similar Species](#) | [Reproductive/Dispersal Mechanisms](#) | [Distribution](#) | [History of Introduction in New England](#) | [Habitats in New England](#) | [Threats](#) | [Early Warning Notes](#) | [Management Links](#) | [Documentation Needs](#) | [Additional Information](#) | [References](#) | [Data Retrieval](#) | [Maps of New England Plant Distribution](#)

#### COMMON NAME

Coltsfoot

#### FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Tussilago farfara* L.

#### FAMILY NAME COMMON

Aster family

#### FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Asteraceae

#### IMAGES



Habit



Spreading  
Rhizomes



Fruit



Close-up of



Close-up of



Leaves

Flowers

Seed Head



Incursion

## NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

**Synonyms:** None

## DESCRIPTION

### Botanical Glossary

*Tussilago farfara* is an herbaceous perennial that can grow up to 0.5 m (1.6 ft.), but is usually smaller. It has spreading rhizomes that allow for clonal growth. The leaves of this plant are long petioled and cordate to suborbicular in shape. They have a deep, narrow sinus and the margins are callous-denticulate and have shallow lobes. They are 5-20 cm (2-8 in.) long and the same in width. The tops of the leaf are glabrous, while below they have white, short, matted, woolly hairs.

The yellow flowers of *Tussilago farfara* are present on scaly scapes that are sent up by the rhizomes in early spring before the leaves develop. Like many members of the Asteraceae, the flowers have many rays. The heads of the flowers are first cylindric in shape and then expand to be about 3 cm (1.2 in.) in diameter. The bracts beneath the flowers (known as a involucre) are 8-15 mm (0.3-0.6 in.) in diameter. The flowers mature into white balls of tufted seeds similar to dandelions. The seeds are 0.3 cm (0.125 in.) long, cylindrical in shape and yellow or red brown in color.

Page References Fernald 1525, Gleason & Cronquist 560, Holmgren 528, Magee & Ahles 1007, Newcomb 358, Peterson & McKenny 110. See reference section below for full citations.

## SIMILAR SPECIES

*Taraxacum officinale* G.H. Weber ex Wiggers (dandelion)

One of the main differences between these plants is that the scape which bears the flower of *Tussilago farfara* has scales on it, while the scape of *Taraxacum officinale* is smooth.

## REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

The seeds are dispersed by the wind, and have been reported to travel up to 8 miles.

## DISTRIBUTION

*Tussilago farfara* is native to Europe. It has been reported in Canada, and is considered a provincial noxious weed in Ontario. In the United States it is present from Maine to North Carolina and west to Minnesota, as well as in Washington state.

## HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

*Tussilago farfara* was likely introduced into the eastern part of North America by early European settlers. The herb was used medicinally, as well as in teas, candy and as tobacco. It was likely planted in herb gardens, and spread via planting or rhizomes.

## HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

*Tussilago farfara* is well adapted to poor, wet soils and can be found along roads, in pastures, in open forests and along rivers. Though the plant can tolerate full sun, it thrives in partial shade.

## THREATS

*Tussilago farfara* can form large colonies because of its rhizomes. The colonies can crowd out native species. These rhizomes can go as deep as 3 m (almost 10 ft.) making it difficult to dig out. Since the seeds are wind-dispersed, they have the potential to travel relatively long distances. Also, because this plant flowers early (with the flower stalks sometimes pushing through the snow) it can disperse its seeds earlier than many native plants.

## MANAGEMENT LINKS

[Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs](#)  
Description and information about chemical control

## DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

Documentation required: A photograph of the flowers and leaves.  
Best time for documentation: Spring, summer, fall.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs](#)  
General information and photographs

[USDA Plants Database](#)  
General information and a map

[Ohio Perennial and Biennial Weed Guide](#)

Photographs, general information, "Facts and Folklore"

[Integrated Taxonomic Information System](#)

## REFERENCES

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Gleason H.A. and A.C. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of Vascular Plants of the Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada. 2nd ed. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York.

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USDA, NRCS. 2001. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.1. (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

## DATA RETRIEVAL

Select a task by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- ☒ Formatted display as table
- ☐ Export as comma-delimited text file

## MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Selection."

- ☒ The whole New England area
- ☐ One or more states
- ☐ One or more counties
- ☐ One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

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