



British Yellowhead *Inula britannica* L.

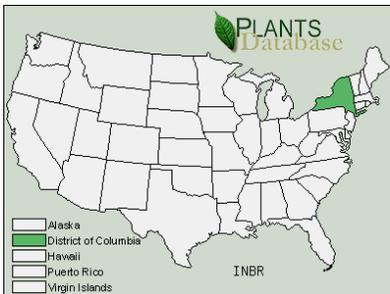
Common Names: British elecampane, British yellowhead, Inula, meadow fleabane, yellow starwort

Native Origin: Native to Europe and Asia, it is now widespread in the Palearctic Region, occurring from Spain to Japan and north to Scandinavia and Siberia. It has become an aggressive weed in field grown hosta in the Netherlands and has been introduced into North America. It has the potential to become a serious weed pest in the United States.



Description: An erect biennial or perennial herbaceous plant in the aster family (Asteraceae) ranging from 6 to 30 inches tall. The stems may be densely covered with appressed hairs or almost hairless. 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 and are rounded at the base while lower leaves are usually on short stalks and elliptical or ovate-elliptical in shape. 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. Fruits are light brown and have feather-like hairs for wind dispersal. Plants reproduce by seed, short rhizomes, and root fragments. A common configuration is to have a mother plant surrounded by 8 to 10 “satellite plants” connected by rhizomes.

Note: *Inula britannica* L. was introduced to the United States intermingled with nursery hosta or daylily rootstock. *Inula britannica* L. and hosta roots are difficult to distinguish. *Inula britannica* L. has light white, smooth roots while hosta roots are thicker and covered with small raised bumps.



Habitat: This plant tolerates a wide range of soil types and is found primarily in moist habitats, including river and stream banks, marshes, moist meadows, ditches, wet grassland, and wet woods.

Distribution: This species is reported from states shaded on The Plants Database map. It has been found in nurseries in Michigan and other states where it has exhibited invasive tendencies. *Inula britannica* L. may soon be listed on the federal noxious weed list.

Ecological Impacts: Once established, it spreads rapidly.

Control and Management: This aggressive weed may be difficult to eradicate.

- **Manual-** Hand pull small infestations; disposal of rhizomes and root fragments is important to prevent reoccurrences. Use caution not to spread green plant segments in composted trash.
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as dicamba, clopyralid, triclopyr plus clopyralid, and glyphosate. Follow label and state requirements.

References:

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