



S1.01 - MANAGING THE NORTHERN PROGRESSION OF COMMON RAGWEED USING CITIZEN SCIENCE: THE CASE OF THE WALLOON REGION (BELGIUM)

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Abstract

For three growing seasons, common ragweed populations have been monitored and managed in the Walloon region (Southern Belgium) by the Walloon Ragweed Observatory. Although the plant has been present for several decades, it does not yet seem to have reached its exponential phase of colonization.

To estimate the extent of the invasion and its spatial distribution in the Walloon Region, citizen encoding platforms (iNaturalist; Observations.be; Atlas of the flora from Wallonia) are used. In a way to obtain a census as exhaustive as possible, priority has been placed on communication around the species (little known) and the training of stakeholders.

The majority of the populations observed are less than 25 individuals and are near bird-feeding sites, demonstrating that the likely introduction pathway is the contamination of birdseed lots. Although these populations are limited, the number of observed populations is increasing, and some populations already contain several hundred plants, thus risking becoming significant spread centres.

Faced with climate change and the multiple factors favouring the extent of the plant in our region (hen houses and sunflower crops increasing, etc.), the main goal is to be able to detect and coordinate the management of each new population identified.