Common ragweed
*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* L.

**Life cycle**
Erect, branching summer annual.

**Leaves**
Cotyledons are thick and oval to spatula-shaped. Leaves are fernlike, once or twice compound, and usually hairy. Upper leaves are alternate; lower leaves may be opposite or alternate with distinct petioles.

**Stems**
Usually hairy, erect and branched up to 6 feet tall.

**Flowers and fruit**
Flowers are generally inconspicuous, found on terminal branches. They produce prolific amounts of pollen. The seed is enclosed in a single-seeded, woody fruit with several spikes resembling a crown.

**Reproduction**
Seeds.

**Similar weeds**
- **Giant ragweed** (*A. trifida* L.)
  Differs by having cotyledons three to four times larger; three- to five-lobed leaves opposite in arrangement; and a height that may reach 15 feet. (See pages 62-63.)

- **Western ragweed** (*A. psilostachya* DC.)
  Differs by having a perennial nature with prolific creeping roots, densely hairy leaves and a height typically not above 4 feet.