

DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE ... Chris Morrissey

Senecios - Fireweed, Groundsel.

Senex - Old man, referring to the fluffy seed heads which may collectively look like an old man's beard.

Senecios are annual or perennial herbs or shrubs, members of the Asteraceae family.

There about 14 species growing in our area, plus the dreaded Ragwort, *Senecio jacobea*, from Europe and Asia. It is a very invasive weed and contains an alkaloid poison which damages the liver of livestock if eaten, causing them to become ill and even die in some cases.



Senecio hispidulus

Senecio hispidulus

Rough Fireweed

Both the stems and leaves of this common plant are hairy and rough. The leaves are lance- to oval-shaped, coarsely toothed to deeply lobed. The terminal flowers are yellow and tubular in clusters on stems up to one metre high. It flowers from spring to summer in forest and woodland, often in disturbed soil.

Senecio odoratus

Scented Groundsel

This senecio has large, bluish-green fleshy leaves, toothed and strongly scented. They can be up to 14 cm long, smooth or hairy on the upper surface, and clasping the stem. The yellow tubular flowers appear in spring and summer. This plant is widespread along the coast, and can grow to over 1.5 m in height.



Senecio odoratus

Senecio pinnatifolius* var. *lanceolatus

Lance-leaf Groundsel

This is a common erect or sprawling herb, found growing on the coast and in woodland. It has variable, fleshy leaves which can be lance shaped or deeply lobed, and are bright green. The bright yellow, daisy- shaped flowers appear in spring and summer.



Senecio pinnatifolius
var. *lanceolatus*

References - *Flowers of Anglesea and Aireys Inlet* ed Margaret MacDonald
Flora to the Otway Plain and Ranges 2. Enid Mayfield



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