

## Common Yarrow

### The Pioneer and Introductory Species to Integrated Pest Management

Common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is a native perennial herb in the Aster (*Asteraceae*) family that thrives in sun or part shade. It is drought tolerant, but can be found in wetter areas as well. It is easy to cultivate and is a host to a great diversity of pest-predators and pollinators.

Yarrow is a very successful reproducer through both sexual reproduction (seed) and asexual reproduction (spreading underground via rhizomes). The mature white flowers (below left) are many flowers making up a “larger looking flower” (inflorescence). The dried inflorescence (bottom right) can be easily pruned from the plant in mid to late summer and stored for later use.

Yarrow can be interplanted with pest-vulnerable plants to take advantage of its strong odor which works as a pest deterrent. Interplanting also serves a second function since yarrow is a mineral accumulator with its deep taproots which bring potassium, phosphorus and copper from the subsoil layers. Most important is yarrow’s coevolution with many pest-predators such as lacewings, parasitoid wasps, ground beetles, spiders, ladybugs, and hoverflies. This relationship serves as the foundation of an *integrated pest management* program that eliminates the need for using pesticides.



#### Timeline

1. Collect inflorescence in mid to late summer and store in a cool, dry place.
2. Identify areas within or along the margins of cultivated spaces. Prep soil by covering with mulch (straw, etc.).
3. In the fall, crumble inflorescence between hands and broadcast seed.
4. Mulch seeds with wood chips.

