

NOXIOUS WEED FACT SHEET

Hoary Cress (*Cardaria draba*)

FAMILY: BRASSICACEAE



Description:

Hoary Cress is a deep rooted perennial that grows up to 2 feet tall. It reproduces from root segments and by seed. Leaves are blue-green in color, lance shaped and covered with soft, white hairs. Lower leaves are stalked; upper leaves have two lobes that clasp the stem. Plants have many white flowers with four petals, giving the plant a white, flat-topped appearance. Plants emerge in very early spring and have bloomed and set seed by early summer. It is closely related to hairy whitetop and lens-podded whitetop.

This plant originates from central Europe and western Asia and was first found in the United States in 1862 and in Washington state in 1916. It probably arrived with contaminated alfalfa seed.

The seeds from a Hoary Cress plant are generally rounded to somewhat heart-shaped and hairless. They are dark brown and one mature plant can produce anywhere from 1,200—4,800 seeds. Buried seeds can remain viable up to 3 years. Seeds are spread by the wind, along waterways, by vehicles and can be found in contaminated hay and crop seed.

Habitat:

Hoary Cress thrives under a wide variety of soil conditions and commonly grows in disturbed sites, pastures, ditches, roadsides, vacant lots, rangeland, stream banks and other waterways. It will form large, dense colonies if not controlled.

Control Methods:

The whole site needs to be considered, not just the weed. Plant competition is a good tool that is often overlooked. Restoring disturbed sites with desirable vegetation will help to reduce regrowth. Hoary Cress is a very aggressive plant that can infest large areas quickly which is why it is important to keep it from going to seed. It can impair the quality of wildlife habitat, impact the native plant community, increase soil erosion and decreases the quality of recreational lands.



Mechanical Control — Successful hand pulling or digging can be done on very small infestations. It requires complete plant removal within 10 days after weed emergence throughout the growing season for 2 to 4 years. Cultivation must be at least 6 inches deep and also repeated every 10 days. If not, the small, broken root fragments that are left behind will form a new plant that will quickly become many new plants. Mowing to ground level during flowering will reduce seed production but does not provide control of the underground root stocks.

Biological Control — There are no biological control parasites (insects or disease organisms that live only on hoary cress or whitetops) available for use at this time in the United States.

Chemical Control — Hoary Cress can be controlled with herbicides, although it is difficult. Success will depend on an aggressive reapplication program and spraying will need to be done on actively growing rosettes in the spring, to the regrowth before the bud stage and/or on fall regrowth, before the first killing frost.



March, April <i>Seedling/Rosette</i>	May <i>Bolting, Bud, Bloom</i>	September, October <i>Flowering, Seed, Fall Regrowth</i>
2,4-D	WeedMaster, Range Star, Rifle D	Fall regrowth
WeedMaster, Range Star, Rifle D	Telar	2,4-D
Telar		Telar
Milestone + 2,4-D		Milestone + 2,4-D

Recommended herbicides:

Read and follow all label instructions when applying herbicides. Trade names have been used to simplify instructions and no endorsement or warranty is expressed or implied.

Spokane County Noxious Weed Control Board

222 N. Havana, Room 112
Spokane, WA 99202
(509) 477-5777

For additional information on Noxious Weeds
and the State Weed Law,
visit our website at:

www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard

