



# Hoary Cress (*Cardaria draba* (L.) Desv.)

aka Whitetop, heart-podded hoary cress, pepperweed, white-weed

**SK Provincial Designation:** Noxious

## Overview:

The Hoary Cress is a perennial herb native to western Asia and eastern Europe. It was introduced to North America in the early 1900's by contaminated seeds. This plant reproduces aggressively and can reproduce both by seeds and vegetatively.

Hoary cress spreads rapidly by creeping roots. The root system of this plant consists of vertical and lateral roots from which new rosettes and flowering shoots arise. Within three weeks of germination, a seeding root can begin to grow buds.

One hoary cress plant can produce from 1200 to 4800 seeds. About 84% of seeds produced are viable the first season. Buried seeds can remain viable for up to three years.



Flowers

PHOTO: Chris Evans, Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, Bugwood.org

## Habitat:

Hoary cress grows at low – to mid-elevations, it can be found on dry roadsides, fields, and disturbed habitats. It is typically found on open, un-shaded, disturbed ground.

## Identification:

**Stems:** Plant can grow 20 to 50 centimeters tall and is erect with branches. The hoary cress is often sprawling.

**Leaves:** Leaves are blue-green in colour, 4 to 10 centimeters long, alternate, and are lance-shaped. Lower leaves have stalks whereas leaves higher up have two lobes clasping the stem.

**Flowers:** Flowers are white in colour with four petals. Plants have numerous flowers giving the plant a white, flat-topped appearance. Plants flower from May to June.

**Seed:** Seed pods are heart shaped and contain two reddish-brown seeds.

## Prevention:

Hoary Cress was introduced to Saskatchewan as an ornamental planting that has since escaped into a natural area. Do not purchase or grow Hoary Cress. If removing this plant, ensure proper steps are taken for disposal, site re-vegetation, monitoring and after-care. For additional information, contact the SK Invasive Species Council.



PHOTO: Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education



Leaves

PHOTO: Pedro Tenorio-Lezama, Bugwood.org

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# Hoary Cress (*continued*)

## Control:

**Grazing:** Sheep grazing may help manage hoary cress.

**Cultivation:** Cultivation is effective in managing the plant when tillage begins at the flower bud stage and is repeated every 7 to 14 days throughout the growing season.

**Mechanical:** It is imperative to remove the root system of the plant to stop reproduction. Mowing 2-3 times a year for several years may slow the spread and reduce the seed production of the hoary cress. Mowing should occur during the bud stage and repeated when the plant re-buds.

**Chemical:** Pesticide application in riparian areas requires certified pesticide applicators and must meet provincial Codes of Practice. The use of pesticides in any manner not published on the label or registered under the Minor Use of Pesticides regulation constitutes an offence under both the Federal Pest Control Products Act and provincial acts in Saskatchewan. For the latest information on pesticides for agricultural use in Saskatchewan, please consult the provincial Guide To Crop Protection produced annually by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture or consult your local Ministry of Agriculture representative.

**Burning:** Fire may enhance the hoary cress populations by setting back other vegetation because the plant can vigorously re-sprout from rhizomes or establishes from seeds.

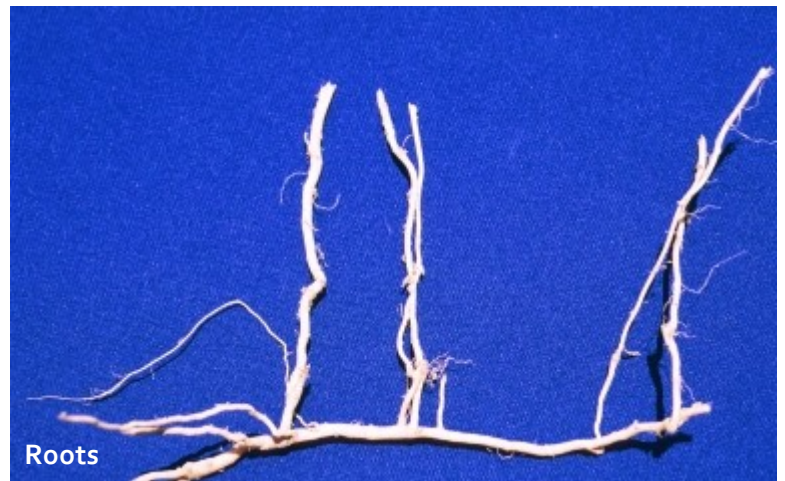


PHOTO: Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org



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## Sources:

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PHOTO: Steve Hurst, USDA NRCS PLANTS Database, Bugwood.org