



## INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

# Hoary Alyssum (*Berteroa incana* (L.) DC.)

aka Hoary false madwort, hoary false alyssum, hoary berteroa, hoary alison

**SK Provincial Designation:** Noxious

### Overview:

The Hoary Alyssum plant is an annual, biennial, or short-lived perennial plant native Europe and Asia. It was introduced to North America in the as a contaminant of crop seed. This plants only form of reproduction is by seed where germination can occur from early spring through to fall. Once the plant is established in an area, a seed-bank develops which can be viable for several years. The hoary alyssum has adapted to cold winters and hot, dry summers, and has a long, slender tap-root that can access moisture in the soil profile.

In both fresh and in cured hay, hoary alyssum is toxic to horses. Horse affect by hoary alyssum experience swelling of the legs, depression and diarrhea, which will normally subside within a few days.



Flowers

PHOTO: Catherine Herms, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org

### Habitat:

Hoary alyssum thrives in dry, gravelly, nutrient poor soils, such as limestone or calcareous soils.

### Identification:

**Stems:** The Hoary Alyssum plant has one stem per plant that is hairy and greyish-green in colour, and is usually branched both at the base and above. The plant can grow 30 to 80 centimeters tall.

**Leaves:** The basal/rosette leaves are lance shaped, 3-5 centimetres long, with slender stalks. Leaves on the stem face upwards, pressed close to the stem. Leaves close to the base of the plant have short stalks, but stalks are lacking higher on the stem.

**Flowers:** Flowers are white, 4-6 millimetres long with deeply notched petals attached to a slender stalk. Hoary Alyssum flowers in early fall.

**Seed:** Seed pods are oblong in shape, 4-7 by 3-3.5mm, and are slightly inflated. Each pod contains 4-12 small reddish-brown lens-shaped seeds with narrow wings on the margins.

### Prevention:

Hoary Alyssum was introduced to Saskatchewan as an ornamental planting that has since escaped into a natural area. Do not purchase



PHOTO: John m. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org

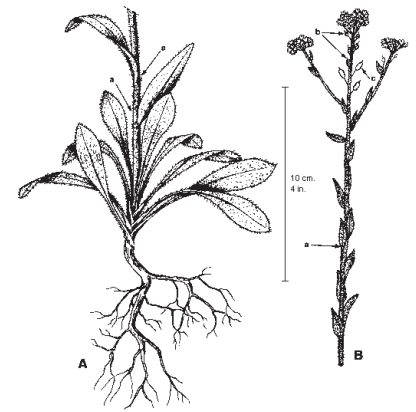


PHOTO: www.weedscanada.ca

or grow Hoary Alyssum. 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.

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# Hoary Alyssum *(continued)*

## Control:

**Grazing:** Over grazing favours hoary alyssum invasion. Invasive plants should not be considered as forage.

**Mechanical:** Hand pulling is an effective method for small infestations but only if the root crown is removed, otherwise re-growth will occur. This is done easiest when soil is moist or by using a shovel to loose the soil to help remove the root system. Plant debris should be disposed of in landfill-bound garbage bags. Burning of mature plants will destroy the seeds. Mowing is not an effective method as it does not get rid of the roots. Shallow tilling can destroy the root system but may also bring buried seeds to the surface for germination.

**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.

**Biological:** A preliminary literature review revealed many insects associated with Hoary Alyssum in Eurasia. There are currently no biological control agents available in Canada.



PHOTO: B.C. Ministry of Agriculture,  
[www.agf.gov.bc.ca](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca)



Flattened seed pods attached to stem

PHOTO: B.C. Ministry of Agriculture,  
[www.agf.gov.bc.ca](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca)



Rosette

PHOTO: Brian Ostwald, abinvasives.ca

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## Sources:

Plant Fact Sheet: Hoary Alyssum. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. [www.plants.usda.gov/factsheet](http://www.plants.usda.gov/factsheet)

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Ontario Weeds: Hoary Alyssum. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. [www.omafra.gov.on.ca](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca)