

# Dame's Rocket Fact Sheet

*Hesperis matronalis*

Brassicaceae Family



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## Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** Flowers have 4 petals arranged in a cross pattern. They are  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1" in diameter, range in color from purple to pink to white, and are very aromatic.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Fruits are many seeded, long and narrow and approximately cylindrical. Seeds are small (3-4 mm long), angular, grooved and dark reddish-brown (Stubbendieck et al. 1995).
- ❸ **Leaves:** Leaves are pointed and lance-shaped, 2-6 inches long, wider at the base, and attached alternately along the stem. They have widely spaced teeth and fine hairs along the leaf edges.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** Mid-May through June.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Dame's rocket generally produces a basal rosette the first year, and flowers the following year. The plants bloom and produce large quantities of seed from May through July. Individual plants are able to produce both flowers and seeds at the same time (Wisconsin DNR 1998).



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## Impacts:

- Its ability to produce large numbers of seeds allows Dame's Rocket to spread very quickly through an area.
- Dame's Rocket has no natural predators in North America and therefore is able to outcompete many native plants.
- The plant tends to form thick monocultures and can starve an area for resources, reducing local biodiversity.

## Control:

- Small infestations of Dame's Rocket can be effectively controlled by hand pulling before the seed pods form. To limit spread, pulled plants should be burned or disposed of in the trash.
- There are currently no biocontrol agents available for Dame's Rocket in the US.
- According to Montana State University, Dame's Rocket can be easily controlled with several herbicides including Glyphosate (roundup). These herbicides, however, are nonselective. To avoid damage to surrounding plants, they should be applied in late fall or early spring.

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