

# Hoary cress (aka White top) Fact Sheet

*Cardaria draba*

Brassicaceae Family



Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Program Archive, MSU, Bugwood.org



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## Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** White with four petals, giving the plant a flat-topped appearance.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Heart shaped capsules, each containing two seeds.
- ❸ **Leaves:** Blue-green and lance shaped with the upper leaves clasping the stem.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** Pre bud May - June; Flowering June - July.
- ❺ **Life cycle/ other:** Biennial reproducing by seed and by rhizomes.

## Impacts:

- Hoary cress is well adapted to moist habitats, especially sub-irrigated pastures and ditch banks. It out-competes native plant communities by forming dense monocultures.
- Hoary cress contains glucosinolates that are toxic to livestock at high levels.

## Control:

- Control of hoary cress is very difficult because of an extensive root system that can grow up to 50 new plants from one lateral rhizome.
- The best control method for large infestations is by working from the outside in, controlling the infestations perimeter and monitoring for new infestations beyond the containment area.
- For small infestations, the most common form of control is by herbicide, applied in May or June between bud and flowering time. Effective choices include: 2,4-D (4 and 6EC), Telar 75 (DF), Ally (60 DF), and Escort. It is imperative to spray before the plants begin to flower. If applied after flowering, the plants **will set** viable seed.
- Mowing, grazing, and cultivation when used alone will not provide effective long-term management.



Above photos: Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org