



# HOARY CRESS

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Cardarua draba*

**WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?** Hoary cress is an aggressive, creeping perennial weed that can grow from 1 to 2 feet tall and can be quickly identified by the compact flattop clusters of white flowers.

Plants emerge early in the spring and the leaves appear bluish green. This

noxious weed is commonly known as whitetop.



## WHERE DOES IT LIKE TO GROW?

Hoary cress prefers to grow in fields, meadows, pastures, croplands and along roadsides. It most often is found in full sun on open areas of disturbed ground.

**WHEN DOES IT BLOOM?** Hoary cress flowers from May to June and plants set seed by mid-summer.



**HOW DOES IT SPREAD?** Hoary cress reproduces from seed or from buds that form on the horizontal growth of rootstocks. Seed capsules are heart-shaped with two small, flat, reddish brown seeds. One plant can produce from 1,200 to 4,800 seeds.

**HOW DO I CONTROL IT?** The key to effective control of this plant is preventing it from becoming established on your land. Use a mixture of control methods including using a competitive grass crop, crop rotations, and

herbicides. See the reverse side for more information on mechanical, cultural, biological and chemical control options for Hoary Cress. Also see our Chemical Treatment handout for more information on using herbicides.

Want more information? Contact:

**Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control**  
**10905 N. Ramsey Road**  
**Hayden, ID 83835**  
**208-446-1290**

**kcnoxioussweeds@kcgov.us or [www.kcweeds.com](http://www.kcweeds.com)**

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# How to Control Hoary Cress (Whitetop)

Hoary Cress is a perennial that reproduces not only by seed but also vegetatively through creeping rhizomes, so control must kill the roots as well as the top growth.

**Mechanical** In general, digging/pulling/tilling will not control Hoary Cress because the roots and root fragments left behind will regrow new plants, however intense repeated cultivation for 2-4 years may exhaust the roots. Well timed mowing may prevent seed production but will not kill existing plants.

**Cultural** The best long term weed control is to get your desirable native plants thriving. Manage for good soil health and plant competitive crops such as Alfalfa or grass forage crops to crowd out Hoary Cress.

**Biological** No agents have been registered yet for biological control of Hoary Alyssum.

**Chemical** *\*See our Chemical Treatment handout for more information on herbicide use. Be sure to choose a systemic chemical that will translocate to the roots and kill all growing points.*

- **Chlorsulfuron** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Telar XP**. It is broadleaf selective (safe on most grasses) and comes as a dry dispersible granule that must be mixed into water and agitated before spraying. It is one of the most effective chemicals to treat Hoary Cress if applied during the bud and bloom stages, or to new rosettes in the fall.
- **Metsulfuron Methyl** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Escort XP**. It is very similar to Chlorsulfuron above, and is also very effective on Hoary Cress if applied during the bud and bloom stages.

*Chemical recommendations are based on University of Idaho Extension Bulletin 865 Idaho's Noxious Weeds 2011 Control Guidelines Noncrop and Rangeland Sites, the book Weed Control in Natural Areas in the Western United States published by UC Davis Weed Research & Information Center, and herbicide labels.*