

## Shotweed *Cardamine hirsute*

Shotweed is a broadleaf plant of the Mustard family (*Brassicaceae*) that found its way to the Pacific Northwest all the way from Europe. It is classified as an early germinating winter annual. However, I don't think it is too concerned with what class we put it in, because it will germinate and grow throughout the year in cooler environments.

This plant grows in a rosette of leaves to less than five inches tall, and then sends out an inflorescence on a stem that ranges from two inches to over twelve inches. The leaves are diverse in form and can be very small to medium sized, pinnate or bipinnate. They originate from both the crown and the upper part of the stem, and the leaf margins can be smooth or serrated. This can be very confusing when attempting to identify it. Shotweed has a compound leaf structure with one large terminal leaflet and four to eight leaflets that are arranged alternately on the rachis. Each leaflet is circular, club shaped, or almost heart shaped.



The inflorescence is a raceme with many individual white flowers. Each flower has four petals that are about one eighth to one quarter inch in diameter. Although my resources say that it only blooms between mid March and mid April, I can look outside my window to my garden and see the little guy now, in June. He seems to say, "Hmm! I'll bloom when I want, thank you!"

Like its relatives in the Mustard family, it produces seed pods called siliques. The siliques of Shotweed are thin, slender, and one to two inches long. They are two-sided and dry while on the plant. In this dry state, they are explosively dehiscent. This, to me, is an unmistakable identifying characteristic. No matter the various leaf forms; no matter the seemingly unpredictable flowering schedule; no matter the vigor or lack of; if I reach down and pull this weed from my garden, and it shoots a zillion seeds in every direction, I know it for what it is: Shotweed!



Shotweed is also known as Little Bittercress, Pepperweed, and Snapweed. It can be controlled by cultural, mechanical, or chemical methods. Mulching in the summer will discourage seed germination. Pulling Shotweed up by the roots can offer some control, however, if the seeds shoot into your mulched bed, they will probably germinate eventually, as the seeds remain viable in the soil for several years. Ground covers can hinder germination and weed establishment. Broadleaf herbicides are another management option. Remember to use broadleaf herbicides such as Dicamba and 2, 4-D with extreme caution near the roots of trees, shrubs, and other desirable plants. And always read and follow all label directions.

**RESOURCES:**

Northwest Weeds, 9<sup>th</sup> Printing, 2004

Weeds of the West, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2001

Oregon State University

<http://mint.ippc.orst.edu/bittercress>

Oregon State University

<http://oregonstate.edu/dept/nursery-weeds>

Washington State University

<http://pep.wsu.edu/HortSense>

Washington State University

<http://pep.wsu.edu/pdf/2001IPMforweeds>

