

# Hoary cress

Colorado Department of  
Agriculture

305 Interlocken Pkwy  
Broomfield, CO 80021

(303) 869-9030  
weeds@state.co.us



## Key ID Points

1. White flowers.
2. Grows erect 10-24" in height.
3. Leaf is 3/4-4" long with blunt end and fine white hairs.

## Hoary cress Identification and Management

well on alkaline soils.



## Identification and Impacts

**H**oary cress (*Lepidium draba*) commonly known as whitetop, is a creeping perennial that is a member of the mustard family and native to Europe. The stems, in the rosette stage, may grow up to 2 inches in height and produce grayish-green leaves that are lance shaped. The leaves are alternate and 3/4 to 4 inches long. The upper leaves have 2 lobes that clasp the stem. The plant has numerous small, white flowers with 4 petals on stalks radiating from a stem. Seed capsules are heart-shaped with two small, flat, reddish brown seeds. One plant can produce from 1,200 to 4,800 seeds. The plants emerge in early spring with stems emerging from the center of each rosette in late April. Hoary cress flowers from May to June and plants set seed by mid-summer.

**H**abitats for Hoary Cress include: fields, waste places, meadows, pastures, croplands and along roadsides. It is typically found on unshaded, generally open areas of disturbed ground. It generally does better with moderate amounts of precipitation and grows

**T**he key to effective control of Hoary cress is prevention. Preventing the encroachment of these weeds is the most cost-effective management. Preventing invasions by limiting seed dispersal, monitoring and using weed free hay, and quarantine animals that may have grazed in infested areas. Beyond prevention, the key is early detection when infestations are small, and aggressive management. Integrated Weed Management is required for proper control. Details on the back of this sheet can help to create a management plan compatible with your site ecology.

**H**oary cress is designated as a "List B" species in the Colorado Noxious Weed Act. It is required to be either eradicated, contained, or suppressed depending on the local infestations. For more information visit [www.colorado.gov/ag/weeds](http://www.colorado.gov/ag/weeds) and click on the Noxious Weed Management Program. Or call the State Weed Coordinator at the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Conservation Services Division.



Photos © Kelly Uhing, Colorado Department of Agriculture; Mark Schwarzlander, University of Idaho, Above map: Crystal Andrews, Colorado Department of Agriculture,

*Lepidium draba*

**CULTURAL**

Prevent the establishment of new infestations by minimizing disturbance and seed dispersal, eliminating seed production and maintaining healthy native communities. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service for seed mix recommendations. Planting competitive legumes, such as alfalfa, can reduce Hoary cress in crop rotations.

**BIOLOGICAL**

There is no biological control available for Hoary cress. Since biological control agents take years to research, develop and release, no releases are expected in the foreseeable future. For more information, contact the Palisade Insectary of the Colorado Department of Agriculture at 970-464-7916.

**MECHANICAL**

Mowing several times before the plants bolt stresses Hoary cress and forces the plant to use nutrient reserves stored in the root system. Combining mowing with herbicides will further enhance control of this weed. Mow repeatedly during the summer, then apply a herbicide in the fall.

*Integrated Weed Management:*

*No single treatment provides effective, long term control. The best and first defense is always prevention. Once established, integrate a variety of combinations of competitive planting, crop rotations, and herbicides. This can reduce Hoary cress to manageable levels.*

# Hoary cress

**HERBICIDES**

NOTE: The following are recommendations for herbicides that can be applied to range and pasturelands. Rates are approximate and based on equipment with an output of 30 gal/acre. Please read label for exact rates. Always read, understand, and follow the label directions. The herbicide label is the LAW!

Herbicide	Rate	Application Timing
Chlorsulfuron* (Telar)	1 oz. product/acre + 0.25% v/v non-ionic surfactant	Apply at flowering. (Early spring to early summer)
Metsulfuron (Escort XP)	1 oz. product/acre + 0.25% v/v non-ionic surfactant	Apply at flowering. (Early spring to early summer)
Imazapic (Plateau, Panoramic)	12 oz./acre + 2 pints/acre methylated seed oil or crop oil concentrate	Apply at late flower to post-flower growth stage. (Late spring to mid-summer)

Note: \*This herbicide has residual soil activity that will affect all broadleaf seedlings germinating after application has occurred.

Additional herbicide recommendations for other species can be found at:  
[www.colorado.gov/agconservation/CSUHerbicideRecommendations.pdf](http://www.colorado.gov/agconservation/CSUHerbicideRecommendations.pdf)