



Government
of South Australia

WEED IDENTIFICATION NOTES

ANIMAL AND PLANT CONTROL COMMISSION

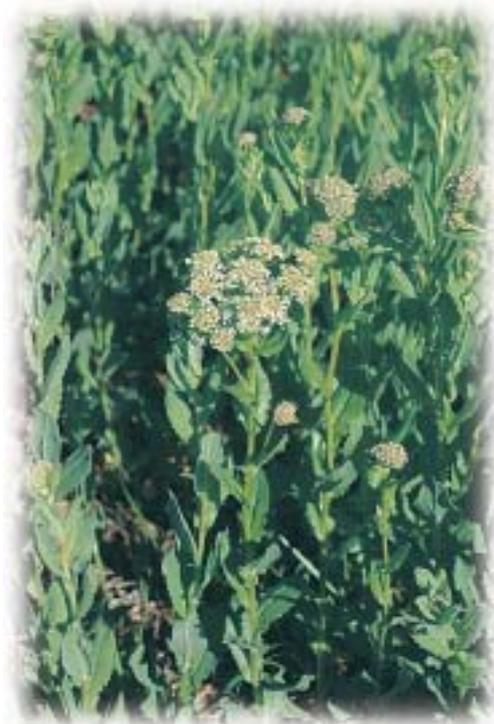
HOARY CRESS



Paddock infested with hoary cress



Rosettes of hoary cress



Hoary cress in flower

HOARY CRESS



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Hoary cress, *Cardaria draba*, is a perennial weed introduced from the Mediterranean region and western Asia. It is easily spread across paddocks by cultivation and therefore it is important to keep hoary cress off clean properties or to recognise and destroy new infestations before they become established.

Distribution

Eyre Peninsula	- isolated infestations on lower and eastern EP
Northern pastoral	- sparse in marginal country, not present elsewhere
Northern ag districts / Yorke Peninsula	- scattered with some large and some small infestations
Murray Mallee	- isolated outbreaks
South East	- a few small isolated outbreaks
Central region	- very isolated patches

Impacts

Hoary cress seriously reduces the yield of cereal crops due to competition by its deep and extensive root system and also interferes with harvesting. If eaten by stock it taints meat and milk, and may be poisonous in larger quantities.

Recognition

Hoary cress is an erect perennial weed to 75 cm high. The leaves and stems are blue-green with fine white hairs. The first leaves form a rosette at ground level, and are wedge shaped and up to 10 cm long. The erect stem develops later and has smaller oval leaves. Flowers are 4-6 mm wide, white in colour and have 4 petals; they are arranged in dense groups on fine stalks in a broad cluster at the top of the stem. The fruit is a heart-shaped capsule 2-4 mm long containing 1-2 seeds, which are reddish brown and 2 mm long. The main taproot can extend 2 metres deep in the soil with many horizontal roots branching off it.

Biology

Hoary cress is a deep-rooted perennial that reproduces by suckering from rootstocks or by seed. Seeds germinate in autumn and rosettes form over winter and spring. Plants do not flower in the first year but develop an extensive root system. New growth occurs from the crown and root buds in autumn with stems growing over winter and flowering from September to November. Aerial growth dies off in summer.

A single hoary cress plant can produce between 1000 and 5000 seeds which have 80% viability. But the main method of dispersal is by cultivation that moves root fragments.

Further Information:

Parsons, W.T. & Cuthbertson, E.G. (2000). *Noxious Weeds of Australia*. 2nd edn. Inkata Press.

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For more advice on recognising and controlling hoary cress, contact your local Animal and Plant Control Board:



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