

# Hoary cress

*Cardaria draba*

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**Hardy perennial with stout, erect or procumbent stems**

**Seedling leaves have a sharp pepper taste**

**Cardaria draba is distinguished from other Cardaria species by:**

- Heart-shaped fruit containing only 2 seeds
- As fruit matures and dries, distinct veins appear

**Cardaria draba is distinguished from Lepidium species by:**

- Lepidium leaves are perfoliate (completely encircle the stem)
- Lepidium fruit is flattened, keeled or winged
- Lepidium fruit is dehiscent, cardaria is indehiscent

**Habitat**

- Prefers non-shaded, moist, disturbed soils with little competition
- Roadsides and ditches
- Cropland and wasteland
- Watercourses and irrigation canals
- Gardens
- Feedlots

**Flowers**

- Monoecious
- Blooms May through July
- Flowers are four-petaled with long, narrow bases (spoon-shaped)

**Seeds**

- Two seeds per fruit
- Plants can produce up to 850 fruits per flowering stem
- Germination rates of 93% are common
- Temperature range for germination: 68°-86°
- Dispersal by animals, humans and water

**Roots**

- Roots grow 3-6 feet deep
- 25 day old plant: 10" taproot, 5-6 lateral roots
- 100 day old plant: 48 shoots, 80 root buds
- ½" root segment can regrow if within 2-4" of surface

**Growth and reproduction**

- Under ideal conditions, rosettes form 2-3 weeks after emergence, roots develop within 5 weeks and aboveground branching within 13 weeks
- Lateral root growth can exceed 10 feet during the first year, 2-3 in the following seasons
- Reproduction from rootstocks and seeds

**Management**

- Mowing 2-3 times per season after flowering, can weaken plant
- Repeated cultivation at 10 day intervals prior to seed set Herbicides: chlorsulfuron, metsulfuron, 2,4-D

**Threats**

- Reduces crop yields and forage production, toxic to livestock
- Displaces native species reducing biodiversity

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