

HOARY ALYSSUM

Berteroa incana (L.) DC.

Family: *Brassicaceae* (Mustard).

Other Scientific Names: None.

Other Common Names: None.

Legal Status: Regional Noxious: Kootenay-Boundary.



Identification

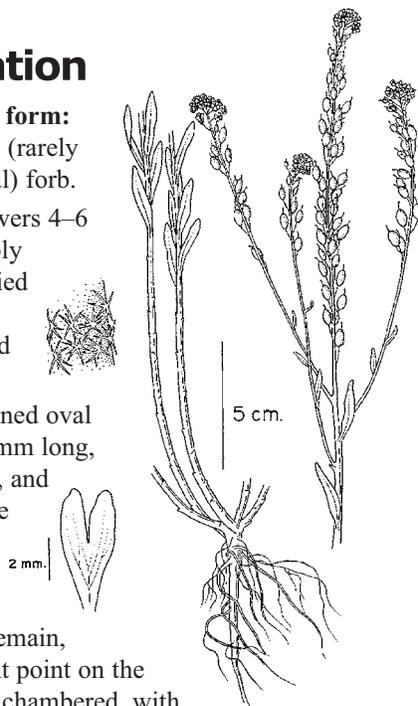
Growth form:

Biennial (rarely perennial) forb.

Flower: White flowers 4–6 mm long with deeply notched petals carried on slender stalks.

Sepals are hairy and soon drop off.

Seeds/Fruit: Flattened oval seed pods are 5–8 mm long, have star-like hairs, and are held close to the stem (BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries 1998). The styles remain, making a prominent point on the tips. Seed pods are chambered, with each chamber containing 3–7 seeds. Seeds, 2–3 mm long, are aligned in rows in the chambers (Douglas et al. 1998).

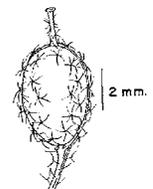
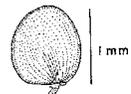


Leaves: All leaves are grey with star-shaped hairs. Basal leaves are 3–5 cm long with slender stalks. Stem leaves face upward, pressed close to the stem. Lower stem leaves have short stalks, but stalks are lacking higher on the stem.

Stems: Erect and branched, 0.3–1.1 m tall, and covered with star-shaped hairs.

Roots: Slender taproot.

Seedling: No information available.



Similar Species

Exotics: Pale alyssum (*Alyssum alyssoides*), desert alyssum (*Alyssum desertorum*), and wall alyssum (*Alyssum murale*) resemble hoary alyssum, but they are smaller plants with much smaller seed pods (at most 4 mm long) that carry only 1–2 seeds/chamber. Wall alyssum and desert alyssum have yellow flowers. Hoary alyssum is also similar to false flaxes (*Camelina* sp.) but differs in having pods on erect stems that touch, or nearly touch, the stem (Frankton and Mulligan 1970).

Natives: None similar.

Impacts

Agricultural: Tends to increase in forage crops following drought or winterkill. Horses consuming this plant may be troubled with fever, limb edema, and laminitis.

Ecological: Establishes in dry, disturbed habitats, such as roadsides and railway embankments.

Human: None known.

Habitat and Ecology

General requirements: Most common on dry sandy or gravelly soils. Grows on meadows, pastures, hayfields, dry fields, roadsides, embankments, and other disturbed habitats.

Distribution: Present in south-central and southeastern

BC in the Okanagan, Thompson, and Kootenay agricultural regions. Present across southern Canada.

Historical: Introduced from Eurasia.

Life cycle: Can behave as an annual, biennial, or perennial. The plant emerges in early spring and

continues to flower and produce seed until frost. Flowering period is from June to September. Perennial form overwinters as a rosette.

Mode of reproduction: By seed.

Seed production: No information available.

Seed bank: No information available.

Dispersal: No information available.

Hybridization: None known.

Management

Biocontrol: No agent available.

Mechanical: Small populations are killed by hand-pulling or hoeing. Mowing can prevent seed production.

Fire: No information available.

Herbicides: Most commonly 2,4-D is used, but dicamba and glyphosate also are effective. Apply in spring or autumn to actively growing plants. Consult the most recent edition of BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Crop Production Guides for specific recommendations. **Before applying herbicides, read the label for full use and precautionary instructions.**

Cultural/Preventive: Grazing or crop management should aim to promote a healthy and competitive forage stand to resist invasion.

Integrated Management Summary

Early detection is important to prevent large infestations. Hand-pull plants before they mature in order to prevent seed-set and establishment of a seed bank. Apply herbicides to control seedlings and mature plants. Seed disturbed areas to perennial grasses and forbs to provide cover and competition against this weed.

References

Douglas, G. W., D. Meidinger, and J. Pojar. 1998. Illustrated Flora of British Columbia. Vol. 2: Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons (Balsaminaceae through Cuscutaceae). Province of British Columbia.

Frankton, C., and G. A. Mulligan. 1970. Weeds of Canada. Publication 948. Ottawa: Canada Department of Agriculture.

