

# WILD MUSTARD

*Brassica kaber* (DC.) L.C. Wheeler

**Family:** *Brassicaceae* (Mustard).

**Other Scientific Names:** *Sinapis arvensis*.

**Other Common Names:** Charlock mustard, kaber mustard.

**Legal Status:** Regional Noxious: Peace River.



## Identification

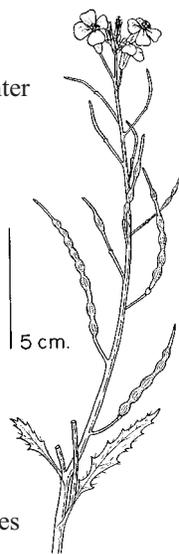
**Growth form:** Annual or winter annual forb.

**Flower:** Flowers are 13 mm in diameter, yellow, with 4 petals. Flowers are borne in small terminal clusters up to 30 cm long.

**Seeds/Fruit:** Seed pods are smooth, 4–5 cm long and 2 mm wide, and have a constricted beak that often includes the uppermost seed. Seeds are small, smooth, round, and black to purplish brown (Stubbenieck et al. 1995).

**Leaves:** Leaves are alternate, 5–15 cm long, and 2.5–10.0 cm wide. Lower leaves are deeply lobed, and upper leaves are merely toothed and may be short stalked or stalkless.

**Stems:** Mature plants are 0.3–1.0 m tall. Stems are erect and branched near the top. The lower stems are coarsely hairy.



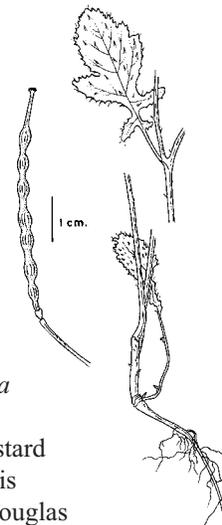
**Roots:** Shallow taproot.

**Seedling:** Seed leaves (cotyledons) are kidney-shaped and smooth. True leaves are alternate and hairy and vary considerably in size and shape. The stem is also hairy, especially near its base (Carey et al. 1993).

### Similar Species

**Exotics:** None.

**Natives:** White mustard (*Brassica hirta*) resembles wild mustard, except that the pods of white mustard are covered with coarse hairs. This species is rare in southern BC (Douglas et al. 1998).



## Impacts

**Agricultural:** Wild mustard can invade grain and other field crops as well as disturbed areas. It can reduce crop yields, lower the crop value, and reduce livestock forage production in rangeland.

**Ecological:** No information available.

**Human:** No information available.

## Habitat and Ecology

**General requirements:** In BC, wild mustard is found at lower elevations at the coast and Interior grasslands, where it grows under dry to average soil moisture conditions on fields and disturbed habitats. In other areas it is commonly found in crops and along roadsides and cultivated fields.

**Distribution:** Rare in southwestern and south-central BC (Douglas et al. 1998) and considered a major

concern only in the Peace River agricultural reporting region.

**Historical:** Introduced from Europe.

**Life cycle:** Wild mustard relies on insects for pollination (Kunin 1997).

**Mode of reproduction:** By seed.

**Seed production:** Each plant produces 2,000–3,500 seeds.

**Seed bank:** Seeds may remain viable in the soil for several years.

**Dispersal:** No information available.

**Hybridization:** No information available.

## Management

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**Biocontrol:** None.

**Mechanical:** Cut or pull plants before seed-set.

**Fire:** No information available.

**Herbicides:** Metsulfuron-methyl, 2,4-D, or dicamba have been effective in the early spring before the plants bolt. A combination of 2,4-D and dicamba is also effective (Durgan et al. 1997). 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:** Cultivate fields in mid- to late spring. Apply a contact herbicide before planting.

### Integrated Management Summary

Cut, pull, or apply appropriate herbicides to new infestations. Prevent establishment of new populations by maintaining vigorous perennial plant communities on rangeland and pasture. Seed disturbed areas to perennial plants to minimize opportunities for invasion.

## References

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