



Weed of the Month: Lens-Podded Hoary Cress

Welcome to our "Weed of the Month" feature, designed to raise awareness about the impact of noxious invasive weeds on our environment. This month, we're focusing on Lens-podded Hoary Cress (*Lepidium draba*), an aggressive plant species that poses a significant threat to native ecosystems and agricultural lands.

Identification:

Lens-podded Hoary Cress, also known as Whitetop, is a perennial herbaceous plant with distinctive lance-shaped leaves covered in fine, white hairs, giving it a hoary or grayish appearance. It produces clusters of small, white flowers with four petals. As the name suggests, the plant develops distinctive lens-shaped seed pods.



Top Left- Flower clusters of the Lens-podded Hoary Cress

Top Right - Full body of Lens-podded Hoary Cress in blooming stage



Invasive Behavior:

Originating from Europe and Asia, Lens-podded Hoary Cress has rapidly spread across many parts of North America. It thrives in a variety of habitats, including grasslands, roadsides, and disturbed areas. Its aggressive rhizomatous root system allows it to form dense monocultures, displacing native vegetation.



Bottom Left- Example of fresh seed pods still on stem of Lens-podded Hoary Cress

Middle Right- Dried seed pod and seeds of Lens-podded Hoary Cress

Bottom Right - Example of dried seed pods still on stem of Lens-podded Hoary Cress





Impact:

The presence of Lens-podded Hoary Cress can have serious ecological and economic consequences. It competes with native plants for resources, reducing plant diversity and disrupting natural habitats. In agricultural settings, it can significantly reduce crop yields and forage quality, posing challenges for farmers and ranchers.

Control and Management:

Effectively managing Lens-podded Hoary Cress requires a multi-faceted approach. Early detection and rapid response are crucial. Mechanical methods like mowing or tilling can be effective for small infestations. Herbicides may be necessary for larger populations, but should be used judiciously to minimize impact on non-target species.

Left- Rosette form of young Lens-podded Hoary Cress

Right - Fine silver hairs on Lens-podded Hoary Cress leaves



Prevention:

Preventing the spread of Lens-podded Hoary Cress is key to its control. Routinely inspect and maintain your property for any signs of this invader. Be vigilant for any signs of this weed in your area and report sightings to the Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office at **(530) 822-7500**. Currently, this weed has been spotted in various places throughout Sutter County and county staff are working to eradicate the infestation.

By staying informed and taking proactive measures, we can work together to curb the spread of Lens-podded Hoary Cress and protect our native ecosystems. Join us next month for a new "Weed of the Month" feature, where we'll highlight another noxious invasive plant and share tips on how to address it.

For more information about Lens-podded Hoary Cress, feel free to visit the California Invasive Plant Council website at: <https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/profile/lepidium-chalepense-profile/>

For more information about our other county programs, visit our website at: <https://www.suttercounty.org/government/county-departments/agricultural-department>

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our environment and agricultural land!

- Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office

