

Please call 1-866-invader if you suspect you have found this species

Hoary Alyssum
Berteroa incana

Other common name: False Hoary Alyssum

USDA symbol: BEIN2
ODA rating: A



Introduction: Hoary alyssum is a snowy-white flowered upright mustard native to Europe. It can act as an annual, biennial or a short lived perennial depending on environment. Hoary alyssum reproduces only by seed and is a prolific seeder making up to 2600 seeds per plant in open growing conditions. It flowers and seeds throughout the entire growing season. It has a slender taproot and is known to be weedy in much of its range and is a listed noxious weed in Michigan, Idaho, California, Washington, Montana, Minnesota, and British Columbia. The *Berteroa* genus has 4 other plants in it but hoary alyssum is the only one known to be present in the United States.

Distribution: Hoary alyssum has a wide distribution across the continental US and Canada except for the southern United States. It was documented as widespread in the Northeastern US and Ontario, Canada by the 1890's. Northeastern Washington has significant infestations with several smaller populations in south central and western Washington. In Oregon, one historic site was documented in 1911 in Multnomah County on ballast in Portland but no further information is available. There is one active site in Wallowa County near the town of Wallowa and there is a dense infestation near Sisters in Deschutes County.

Description: The plant has the general look of many of the mustards so it might go unnoticed without close examination. The whole plant except the flower is covered with fine hairs giving it a slight grey or hoary appearance. Four bright white, notched petals on clumps of flowers are clustered at the stem tips. Further, the plant has non-clasping stem leaves that have smooth edges.

Impacts: This plant is toxic to horses, usually when they encounter the plant in hay. It lowers production, nutritive characteristics and palatability of alfalfa hay crop. It is also known to invade clover and birdsfoot trefoil crops and has few easy herbicide choices in broadleaf crop scenarios. Goats and sheep were found to select against or reject hay with hoary alyssum in it. It can reduce the productivity of grazing lands. It recently became known as a significant pest in Fraser fir Christmas tree farms in Michigan. The plant spreads readily with soil movement, rail and road system management and can be easily transported between fields on unwashed haying equipment.

Controls: No biological controls are available. Pulling works as long as the plant is severed well below the root crown. Mowing is generally ineffective. Herbicide treatments with sulfonyleureas are effective. Triclopyr, 2,4-D, MCPA, and glyphosate all provided good immediate control of growing plants but no residual for seeds.

