

Hoary Alyssum

Berteroa incana L.

Mustard Family

Key identifying traits

- ❑ Flowers are white with 4 petals, deeply divided
- ❑ Usually only branched at the top of the plant
- ❑ Leaves are alternate, blades are simple
- ❑ Fruit is oblong, with two compartments containing 2-6 seeds
- ❑ Seeds grow close to stem, are round to oblong, narrowly winged, grayish-brown and rough



Biology and ecology

- Can be an annual, winter annual, biennial, or a short-lived perennial (!); usually 1-2½' tall
- Most abundant in disturbed sites but is also found in meadows and pastures
- Starting to be an invader in alfalfa crops
- Can be toxic to horses if it comprises 30% or more of their diet
- Spreads rapidly due to the high number of seeds per plant; spreads only by seed
- Likes direct sunlight but can also tolerate shade



Hoary alyssum on street corner



Hoary alyssum in tree planting



Hoary alyssum on a mountain road

Control

Prevention - Learn to identify plants; know your property; beware of fill dirt, hay and seed

Biological - No known biological control

Cultural - Good vegetative cover helps but does not prevent establishment or spread

Mechanical - Hand pulling or digging can be very effective for small infestations but should be done before there are seed pods. Mowing is not a good control option; plants tend to start growing flat along the ground.

Chemical - [PNW Weed Management Handbook](#) does not have this weed listed for control recommendations, but other annual mustard recommendations may be useful. Telar and Escort are effective on most mustards.

Where found - Largest infestations in the county are in Colville, Arden, Chewelah and Northport areas but Hoary alyssum is spreading rapidly.