

# Shepherd's-purse

*Capsella bursa-pastoris* (L.)

Mustard Family

## Key identifying traits

- ❑ A slender, erect plant growing 3-18" tall
- ❑ Basal leaves are deeply lobed while upper leaves are alternate & lance-shaped & clasp the stem
- ❑ 4-petaled flowers are white, very small & located at the end of elongated racemes
- ❑ Seed pods are heart shaped & 2-celled containing many seeds; they are attached to the stem by a long pedicel

## Biology and ecology

- An annual or winter annual plant spreading by seeds
- Plants flower early in the spring and can produce seed into September
- Shepherd's-purse is a native of Europe but is now well established in the U.S. and Canada
- Commonly found in cultivated fields, gardens, waste areas, pastures and road sides
- Usually not considered aggressive but has been found to be a nuisance in fields and pastures if it is left alone, and can be a problem in grain crops

## Control

*Prevention* - Learn to identify plants; start monitoring and planning for early season control

*Biological* - No known biological control in our area

*Cultural* - Plant competitive grass or other cover crop with certified weed free seed

*Mechanical* - Tilling and mowing can be effective if done before flowering occurs.

*Chemical* - Mustards are resistant to many herbicides but dicamba or metsulfuron can achieve good control: the [PNW Weed Management handbook](#) has some limited information on controlling mustards

*Where found* - Widely spread throughout Stevens County but can seem small and insignificant compared to other weeds.



Photo by Richard Old, [www.xidservices.com](http://www.xidservices.com)