

# Hoary Alyssum

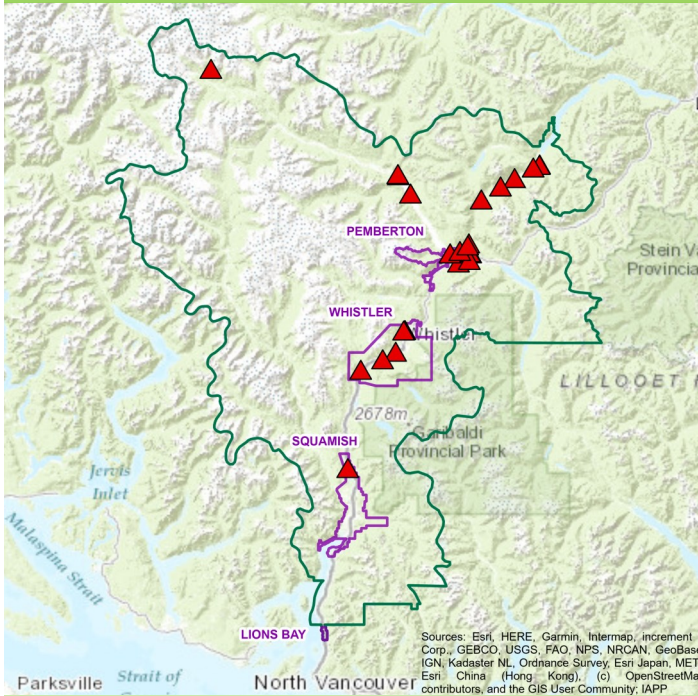
*Berteroa incana*

(AKA. Hoary Berteroa, Hoary False Alyssum)



Squamish: Eradicate | Whistler: Eradicate | Pemberton: Insufficient Information

## DISTRIBUTION



**Origin:** Native to Eastern and Central Europe, Hoary Alyssum is believed to have been brought over to North America as a seed contaminant. It was first discovered in Ontario in the 1800's.

**Habitat:** Hoary Alyssum is well adapted to dry, sandy, gravelly, nutrient poor soils. It can be found growing in idle areas, over-grazed or stressed pastures or meadows, hayfields, roadsides and railways. It can withstand cold winters and dry, hot summers.

**Reproduction:** Hoary Alyssum is an annual, biennial or short-lived perennial that reproduces solely by seed. Germination can occur from early spring through to fall. Each plant can produce up to 2,600 seeds under ideal conditions; the seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to nine years, which leads to the rapid formation of a significant seed bank.

## IDENTIFICATION



**Flowers:** Small, white flowers, 5 - 8 mm long, with deeply notched petals. Sepals are hairy and transient.

**Stems:** Erect, thin stems grow from the base of the plant and branch near the top. Plants can have either single or multiple stems. Hoary Alyssum stems are covered in whitish, star-shaped hairs and are 0.3 - 1.1 m tall.

**Leaves:** Upper leaves are elliptical, face upward, lack stalks and clasp the stem. Lower leaves have long, slender stalks and are 3 - 5 cm long. Both upper and lower leaves have rough, star-shaped hairs.

**Fruits:** Flattened, oval seed pods, 5 - 6 mm long, held close to the stem and have star-shaped hairs. Pods contain 4 - 12 seeds.

**Seeds:** Black, 2 - 3mm long, aligned in chambers in seed pod.

**Roots:** Slender taproot.

### Similar Species:

- **Non-native:** Pale Alyssum (*Alyssum alyssoides*), Desert Alyssum (*A. desertorum*), Wall Alyssum (*A. murale*), Falseflax (*Camelina sativa*)

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**Vectors of Spread:** Hoary Alyssum seeds are dispersed through valves in the seed pods. Seeds are often present as a contaminant in hay, but they are also spread by vehicles, equipment, footwear, wildlife and birds.

#### WHAT CAN I DO?

**Hoary Alyssum is found throughout the Sea to Sky Region, so PREVENTION of further spread is key:**

- Regularly monitor properties for infestations.
- Ensure soil and gravel are uncontaminated before transport.
- Don't unload, park, or store equipment or vehicles in infested areas; remove plant material from any equipment, vehicles, or clothing used in such areas and wash equipment and vehicles at designated cleaning sites before leaving infested areas.
- Minimize soil disturbances (e.g. use grazing plans that prevent soil exposure from overgrazing), and use seed mixes with dense, early colonization (e.g. alfalfa or barley) to re-vegetate exposed soil and resist invasion.
- Ensure plants (particularly flowering heads or root fragments) are bagged or covered to prevent spread during transport to designated disposal sites (e.g. landfill). **Do NOT compost.**

#### Hoary Alyssum can be controlled by:

- **Mechanical Control:** Hand-pulling small infestations and planting native, competitive plants will help to reduce the growth of Hoary Alyssum plants. Mowing or grading as early as possible in the season and repeating regularly will also help to control infestations.
- **Chemical Control:** A combination of 2,4-D and dicamba has been proven most effective for Hoary Alyssum control. Additionally, 2,4-D, dicamba and metsulfuron methyl can be used effectively on their own. Glyphosate can also be used, however it will kill off surrounding vegetation. Spring application of herbicide (when plants are actively growing and prior to bolting) is most effective. Because Hoary Alyssum germinates and establishes throughout the growing season, repeated applications will be needed to target plants regenerating from the seed bank. We recommend that any herbicide application is carried out by a person holding a valid BC Pesticide Applicator Certificate. Before selecting and applying herbicides, you must review and follow herbicide labels and application rates; municipal, regional, provincial and federal laws and regulations; species-specific treatment recommendations, and site-specific goals and objectives.
- **Biological Control:** There are currently no biocontrol agents available for Hoary Alyssum.

**If you suspect you have found Hoary Alyssum anywhere in the Sea to Sky region:**

**Contact** the Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council to report and for the most recent, up to date control methods. All reports will be kept confidential.

**References:** Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Eflora BC, Fraser Valley Invasive Species Society, Government of BC, Invasive Species Council of BC, Lillooet Invasive Species Society, Okanagan Invasive Species Online, UC Weed Research & Information Centre, University of Minnesota Extension.

## IMPACTS

#### Ecological:

- **Out-competes native plants and displaces weak plant communities.**

#### Health:

- **Toxic to horses if eaten, resulting in illness and occasionally death.**

#### Economical:

- **Decreases forage value as mature plants are low in crude proteins and digestible carbohydrate.**



## REPORT SIGHTINGS

Visit [ssisc.ca/report](https://ssisc.ca/report)

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