



Tall whitetop, also known as perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), is an aggressive, invasive perennial weed in the mustard family that can grow up to 6.5 feet tall.

Plant Description & Features

Appearance: An erect, herbaceous plant with stiff, semi-woody stems and bright green to gray-green, waxy leaves.

Flowers: Dense, rounded clusters of tiny white flowers with four petals appear at the tips of the branches from summer to fall.

Roots: An extensive underground root network can reach up to 9–30 feet deep, making the plant very difficult to eradicate.

Where it grows: Common in moist soils, wetlands, riverbanks, roadsides, ditches, and agricultural crop fields.

Ecological threat: Spreads rapidly through both seeds and creeping root fragments to form dense monocultures that crowd out native plants and degrade pastures.

Cultural

Prolonged spring flooding of new growth will kill pepperweed. Reestablish native or desired plants by repeating as needed, which can aid in controlling populations.

Grazing is not recommended because the plant may be toxic. Biological control is not a viable option because 11 other species of native *Lepidium* are on the Endangered Species List, and the risk to these and agricultural species is too great.

Mechanical

Due to the deep, brittle root, most mechanical methods are not recommended, and can actually propagate, spread and increase the density of pepperweed. Hand pulling can also bring seeds to the soil surface, and spread pieces of root, which can sprout. Spring mowing combined with chemical treatments can be effective.

Chemical

Herbicide treatment is recommended for established populations, due to the plant's root system and ability to resprout. Using a surfactant is also recommended due to the plant's waxy cuticle.