



# WHITETOP

*Lepidium draba*

Brassicaceae, the mustard family

Category: Containment

Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org

## FACTSHEET INFORMATION

### Summary of Invasiveness

- Whitetop is an invasive plant that can form monocultures that inhibit the growth of nearby plant species, reducing biodiversity, forage value, and crop yields.
- It can be a host to various agricultural pests and viruses and is unpalatable and toxic to cattle.
- The plant is very difficult to control due to its deeply penetrating roots that store food reserves and quickly regenerate after fragmentation caused by tillage.

### Description

- Perennial herb, growing up to 2 feet tall.
- Pubescent stems arise from branching, woody stocks and are covered with shallow-toothed, pubescent, blue-green, leaves that clasp to the stem with arrow-shaped bases.
- Upper portion of stem branches into several clusters of white, 4-petaled flowers, giving a white, flat-topped look.
- Fruits are heart-shaped seed pods that contain 2 reddish brown seeds.



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### Introduction and Movement

- Whitetop is native to the Mediterranean and western and central Asia and was likely introduced to the the U.S. as a seed contaminant in lucerne.
- Inhabits disturbed sites such as roadsides, rangelands, meadows, pastures, and cultivated fields.
- It is easily spread by seed dispersal via irrigation, wind, contaminated agricultural equipment, and the ability for seeds to pass through digestive tract of livestock unharmed,



Mark Schwarlander, University of Idaho, Bugwood.org

### Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, learn how to identify Whitetop and eradicate infestations on your property.
- Always remove and properly dispose of all seed and plant materials on vehicles, clothing, shoes and pets before you exit or enter outdoor recreational sites.
- Always Remember To: **KNOCK IT OFF!**



Mark Schwarlander, University of Idaho, Bugwood.org

#### Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/10621>
- Idaho's Noxious Weeds 9th Edition, University of Idaho: <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/BUL/BUL816.pdf>.

# WHITETOP DISTRIBUTION MAP

