

# NOXIOUS WEED ALERT

## WHITETOP/HOARY CRESS

(*Cardaria draba*)



photo courtesy "Weeds of the West"  
Western Society of Weed Science

### WHY BE CONCERNED?

- Whitetop is an aggressive non-native species that invades pastures and meadows.
- Whitetop is unpalatable and displaces grasses and other more valuable forage plants for wildlife and livestock.

**Whitetop is on the  
Routt County noxious weed list.  
Control is required in Routt County.**

- Whitetop is a perennial mustard, introduced from Europe.
- Whitetop grows up to 2 feet tall, reproducing from seeds and root segments.
- The upper leaves clasp the stem and have serrated leaves (leaves with jagged edges).
- The white flowers are tiny and occur only at the terminal ends of the stem. Seeds are formed in a bladder-like pod.
- Plants usually bloom in May and early June.

### CONTROL

#### Prevention and early detection are critical for control!

- **Practice** good pasture management; avoid overgrazing, irrigate and fertilize as needed, and reseed bare ground. A healthy pasture will help resist weed invasion.
- **Use** weed-free hay and seed and avoid bringing in weed-contaminated soil.
- **Clean** equipment that has been used in infested areas.
- **Remove** seedlings when young - newly established plants can usually be pulled without leaving root fragments in the ground.
- **Replant** newly weeded areas with desirable (preferably native) plant species that will discourage reinfestation.
- **Dispose** of weeds properly; bag or burn seed heads or fragments that may sprout.
- **Monitor** the site for several years promptly remove new seedlings.

**HAND PULLING/DIGGING** is recommended only for new seedlings. On older stands this method causes more disturbance, which is ideal whitetop habitat.

**MOWING** will slow, but not stop, the spread of whitetop. Plants that are periodically mowed continue to flower and produce seed on shorter plants, prolonging the season of growth and flowering.

**BIOLOGICAL CONTROLS** are not currently available. Due to whitetop's close relationship to several important agricultural crops it is very unlikely that any will be available in the future.

**HERBICIDES** can be effective, but should always be applied with care. **Read and follow all labeled instructions.** Trade names are used here to simplify matters no endorsement is implied. Other brand names may be available with similar ingredients that also will work. See the label for proper rates, sites and grazing restrictions.

- Escort™ is very effective on whitetop. Application needs to occur when sufficient moisture is available in the soil, and a good non-ionic surfactant must be used.
- Plateau™ is also effective, but can stunt cool season grasses. It must be used with methylated seed oil.
- Roundup™ (glyphosate) is not recommended. It is non-selective and will kill other plants, including grasses that might out-compete whitetop seedlings.

Prepared by the **Routt County Weed Control Department**

For more info contact CSU Cooperative Extension, Boulder County at 303-678-6383 or  
Boulder County Parks and Open Space Weed Coordinator at 303-678-6110.