

# Perennial Pepperweed

*Lepidium latifolium*



**Plant Family:** Mustard family (Brassicaceae)

**Other Names:** Perennial peppergrass, broadleaf pepperweed

**Similar Species:** Whitetop, clasping pepperweed

**Weed Classification:** Priority 2A

**Native to:** Asia, Europe, and Northern Africa

**Is This Weed Toxic?** Not known to be

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## Identification

Belonging to the mustard family, this erect branching perennial grows 3 – 5 feet although it can reach up to 8 feet if the conditions are right. Its June-blooming flowers are clustered at the ends of its stems and its grayish-green leaves are sessile meaning they attach directly to the stem. Plants spread both by seed, which each plant produces prolifically, and rhizomes that can reach up to 10 feet long.

## Treatment

Tilling alone can spread viable root fragments and contribute to increased densities of this weed.

Mowing can also contribute to further spread although it is a helpful method for removing dead stems and is a beneficial aspect to an integrated management approach. Although it cannot reduce pepperweed numbers by itself, it can enhance the effectiveness of herbicide because it encourages larger leaf growth, which in turn allows for better herbicide coverage.

Seedlings respond well to hand-pulling but this method cannot be used on established plants due to deep and lengthy roots.

Burning is NOT recommended for actively growing pepperweed since shoots regrow rapidly after fire. This method is comparable to mowing because it can help dispose of dead plant material.

Grazing can be utilized early in the growing season but MUST be combined with other management tactics, since it recovers quickly after animals are removed. New foliage can be grazed by goats, sheep, and cattle but they will generally not continue to graze when the weed begins to flower. Poisonings have been reported in horses when this weed was a contaminant in hay.

Herbicides can be an effective integrated management tool and will need to be utilized for several years to attain long-term control. Application should take place during the early flowering and bud stages since this is when the plant's carbohydrate reserves are at their lowest. To prevent lateral roots from forming, seedlings and young plants can be treated when they are found. These weeds tend to be grow in wet/riparian areas, so be sure to choose herbicide wisely and ALWAYS follow the herbicide label.

"Washington State." *Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board*. NWCB, n.d. Web. 28 Feb. 2017.

"Field Guide for Managing Perennial Pepperweed in the Southwest." *Field Guide for Managing Perennial Pepperweed in the Southwest* (n.d.): n. pag. USDA. US Forest Service, Sept. 2014. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.



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