

Perennial pepperweed  
(*Lepidium latifolium*)

Currently in Montana, noxious weed infest about 8.2 million acres. Many of these state listed noxious weeds were brought to America as ornamentals for gardens, medicinal purposes, by accident in discarded soil from a ship's ballast, or unintentionally in bags of seed brought from other parts of the world. Whatever the cause of introduction non-native plant species have found their way onto Montana's state listed noxious weed list.

Perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*) is native to southern Europe, Asia and the Mediterranean region; it was likely introduced into North America from Eastern Europe as a contaminant in imported sugar beet seed. This plant usually grows 1 to 3' in height and has deep spreading roots that can grow as deep as 6'. Perennial pepperweed inhabits flood plains, irrigation structures, pastures, wetlands, riparian areas, roadsides, and residential sites. Stems and leaves are bright green to gray-green in color. Leaves are broad at the base, taper to a point and have a white mid-vein that runs the length of the leaf. The basal leaves of this plant can grow up to 13" long and 4" wide on the long stalks covered with a waxy coating. Stem leaves are alternate and smaller in size than rosette leaves, with shorter stalks that do not clasp the stem. Perennial pepperweed flowers are small, form dense rounded clusters on top of the branches, and bloom from early summer into fall. Flowers are less than 1/8" wide and have four white petals. Perennial pepperweed fruits are small flattened pods, reddish brown in color, about 1/10" long; with two seed chambers that each produce one seed. Seeds remain on the plant and fall off gradually. This plant has a thick woody stem that can break off at the base and if propelled by the wind, can roll long distances; spreading seeds. Perennial pepperweed is toxic to livestock if eaten. Dense infestation of this plant can prohibit the growth and development of essential riparian trees such as willows and cottonwoods that are important to wildlife.

Please take a few moments to learn about noxious weeds. If noxious weeds are not currently a problem in your area, they may be in the near future. For more information about Montana's state listed noxious weeds, regulated plants, or weed species listed on your county weed list, please contact your local county weed district (can list weed district name here... ex: Lewis & Clark County Weed District) at (406) (Phone number). Or you can contact the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-5600.