



Perennial Pepperweed *Lepidium latifolium* L.

Common Names: tall whitetop, giant whiteweed, perennial peppergrass, slender perennial peppergrass, broadleaf or broadleaved pepperweed, ironweed and other names

Native Origin: southeastern Europe and southwestern Asia

Description: A herbaceous perennial in the Mustard family (Brassicaceae). Plants are multiple stemmed and grow in stiffly erect masses 3 to 8 feet tall. Leaves are lanceolate, bright green to gray green, and entire or toothed. Basal leaves are stalked, up to 1 foot long and 3 inches wide and have serrate margins. Leaf size decreases up the stem. Flowering occurs from early summer to fall. Abundant small white 4-petaled flowers are borne in dense clusters near the stem tips. The fruits are small, flattened pods about 1/10th inch long, each containing 2 seeds (1 per chamber). Fruits remain on the plant, dropping irregularly throughout the winter. The base of the stem is semi-woody. The creeping roots enlarge at the soil line, forming a woody crown. The plant mainly propagates clonally from its brittle rhizome-like roots that grow to a length of up to 6 feet.



Habitat: Perennial pepperweed occurs in riparian (stream) areas, coastal wetlands, marshes, roadsides, railways, ditches, hay meadows, pastures, cropland, and waste places.

Distribution: It occurs in a few states along the eastern seaboard, in several Midwestern states, and in all far western states. Infestations have been reported in coastal, intermountain and mountainous areas in New England, all the states west of the Rocky Mountains. It also occurs in Canada and Mexico.



Ecological Impacts: Perennial pepperweed a highly invasive plant that alters the ecosystem it grows in. It can invade a wide range of habitats including riparian areas, wetlands, marshes, and floodplains. It adapts readily to natural and disturbed wetlands. It may occur as spotty, scattered populations, or as large, dense, nearly monospecific stands. These dense stands have potential to displace native plants and animals, threatened and endangered species, decrease plant diversity, and reduce nesting frequency of waterfowl in or near wetlands.

Control and Management: Deep-seated rootstocks make pepperweed difficult to control.



- **Manual-** Physical and mechanical control methods such as mowing and disking are unlikely to control perennial pepperweed because new plants quickly regenerate from roots and root crowns. Very small patches can be controlled by hand removal if the process is repeated often for several years and plants are not allowed to mature.
- **Chemical-** Foliar application methods have been effective (Telar® - a selective herbicide or a glyphosate such as Roundup® - nonselective herbicide)

Natural Enemies- Several general herbivorous insects are feed on perennial pepperweed (e.g. *Lygus* spp) and a white rust (*Albugo* sp.) infects large numbers of flowers and limits seed production, but do not prevent the clonal expansion of the creeping root system.

References: www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/forb/leplat/all.html, <http://plants.usda.gov>
www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/lela1.htm,
ELEMENT STEWARDSHIP ABSTRACT-<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/documnts/lepilat.html>