

# Perennial Pepperweed

Perennial pepperweed can rapidly form large, dense stands that displace desirable vegetation. Populations easily spread along waterways and can infest entire stream corridors, riparian areas, or irrigation structures. Flooded streams often wash away roots growing along the streambank, and new infestations develop downstream. Once established, perennial pepperweed is persistent and difficult to control in crops, natural areas, and ornamental plantings. Perennial pepperweed also reduces forage quality in hay or pasture. Established perennial pepperweed populations are difficult to control and require multiple years of intensive management.



Perennial pepperweed is a long-lived herbaceous perennial that thrives in seasonally wet areas or areas with a high water table. Plants reproduce from perennial roots or seed. In early spring, new shoots emerge from root buds forming low-growing rosettes. Plants remain in the rosette stage for several weeks before developing a flowering stem. The foliage is glabrous and green to gray-green in color. Rosette leaves are ovate to oblong with entire to serrate margins on long petioles. Rosette leaves are about 4 to 11 inches long and 1 to 3 inches wide. Stem leaves are sessile and lanceolate, have entire to toothed margins, and become smaller toward the top of the stem. Stems range from 2 feet to over 4 feet tall. Flowering typically begins in late spring with mature seed being produced by mid-summer. Small, white flowers form dense clusters arranged in panicles at the tip of each stem. After seed production, flowering shoots die back, although rosettes can emerge again in fall and persist through winter in frost-free areas. Dead stems are slow to decay and accumulate over time, forming dense thickets that prevent growth of desirable species. Perennial pepperweed is a prolific seed producer. Established plants develop an extensive root system capable of storing large amounts of energy. Roots can grow to soil depths greater than 10 feet and spread laterally several feet each year. Root segments also produce adventitious buds capable of generating new shoots. Perennial pepperweed's root system is the foundation of the plant's competitiveness and the major target of control efforts.

**The District has found one patch of Pepperweed in the County, which has proven difficult to control. We encourage everyone to be diligent in monitoring for this weed so as to prevent further introduction into the County.**

