

## Weed of The Week

### Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsute*)

Hairy bittercress is a winter annual broadleaf weed. As the name suggests, this weed has tiny hairs on both its leaves and stems. Hairy bittercress is often one of the first weeds to appear in spring. The first true leaves on hairy bittercress are heart shaped. The rosette is made of pinnately compound leaves with rounded leaflets at the base of the plant and one or more stem leaves with elongated leaflets. The stems grow in an erect and branching pattern reaching heights from 3 to 10 inches. The small white flowers form thin, purple seed pods. After flower petals drop, the narrow pods abruptly open, launching seeds up to several feet from the pod.

Hairy bittercress infestations can be reduced by frequent mowing in early spring to remove flower stems. Don't let it flower or mature as it spreads seeds very easily. Hairy bittercress is best managed mechanically when it is young. Remove it by hand, hoe or tillage in early fall or early spring before it sets seed. If plants are flowering, composting is discouraged as seeds may develop. To chemically control hairy bittercress, preemergence herbicides applications should be applied in late summer or early fall. Postemergence herbicides applications, using a contact, non-selective herbicide to target tender seedlings, should begin in mid-fall or early spring.

