

Austrian Yellowcress

Rorippa austriaca (Crantz) Bess.

Alternate Names

Creeping fieldcress

Synonyms

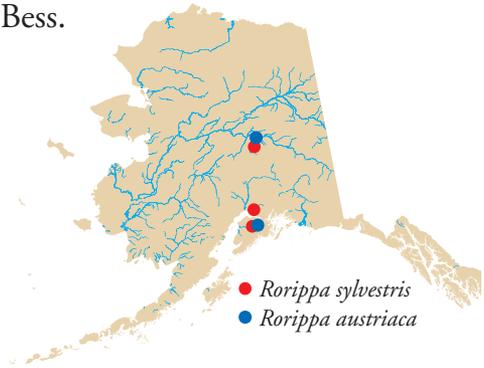
Nasturtium austriacum Crantz.,

Radicula sylvestris (L.) Druce

Related Species

Creeping yellowcress

Rorippa sylvestris (L.) Bess.



Description

Austrian yellowcress is a perennial plant with aggressive, creeping roots and persistent stems that grow to 3 feet tall from a deep, fleshy taproot. Stems are ascending to nearly erect and branched near the top. Leaves are dull bluish-green, hairless, narrowly oblong to oblanceolate, 1–4 inches long, and entire to irregularly toothed. Upper stem leaves narrow to a stalk-like base that clasps the stem. Rosette leaves are covered with short unicellular hairs. Flowers are yellow and 4-petaled in short terminal and axillary racemes. Fruits are ovoid silicles, $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch long, with lower stalks $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch long.



Austrian yellowcress flowers.

USDA Forest Service photo by Elizabeth Belle

Creeping yellowcress is a rhizomatous perennial plant with erect, branched stems growing up to 20 inches long. Leaves are 2–4 inches long and pinnately divided into narrow, sharply toothed lobes. Flowers are yellow with 4 petals that are $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch long. Fruits are linear and $\frac{5}{16}$ – $\frac{7}{16}$ of an inch long with a short beak. Fruits spread at ascending angles to the stem.

Similar Species

This is a large genus that has been revised many times by many authorities. Austrian yellowcress is much larger, more weedy-looking, and generally coarser than the *Rorippa* species native to Alaska, and its nearly spherical fruits make identification straightforward. It has a tall, straight growth habit and doesn't creep or have weak stems. Creeping yellowcress looks more like the native species. It could be mistaken for curvepod yellowcress (*R. curvisiliqua* (Hook.) Bess. ex Britt.) but not bog yellowcress (*R. palustris* (L.) Bess.), because it is smaller than the latter. Curvepod yellowcress has narrow, curved fruits and occurs only rarely in southeast Alaska to the Pacific Northwest and California, whereas creeping yellowcress has been found only in south-central and interior Alaska.

Management

Improving drainage of wet soils on agricultural sites will discourage survival of both species. Some herbicides are effective (CDFA 2005). The effectiveness of hand-pulling is uncertain.

Notes

Austrian yellowcress is a prohibited noxious weed in Alaska (Alaska Administrative Code 1987). The seed is very difficult to clean out of alfalfa seed, which led to the rare situation of this species being listed as a noxious weed in some states prior to its arrival in those states. Creeping yellowcress has become a serious invasive species problem in New Zealand.



USDA Forest Service photo by Elizabeth Bella

Austrian yellowcress.