

Field Pennycress

Thlaspi arvense L.

Alternate Names

Pennycress, stinkweed, frenchweed, fanweed, bastardweed, bastard cress, dish mustard, mithridate mustard

Synonyms

Crucifera thlaspi
Krause, *Thlaspi col-*
linum M. Bieb., *Thlaspidea arvensis* Opiz

Description

Field pennycress is an annual plant with a strong odor that grows 6–18 inches high and is hairless and yellowish-green. The stem is mostly simple. Basal leaves are lanceolate, simple, and entire to lobed. Stem leaves have arrowhead-shaped bases. Flowers have 4 white petals and are clustered in racemes at the ends of branches. The fruit is a pod, $\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, with a circular outline and a deep notch at the top. Each fruit produces 4–16 seeds and has a broad, papery membrane around its edge.



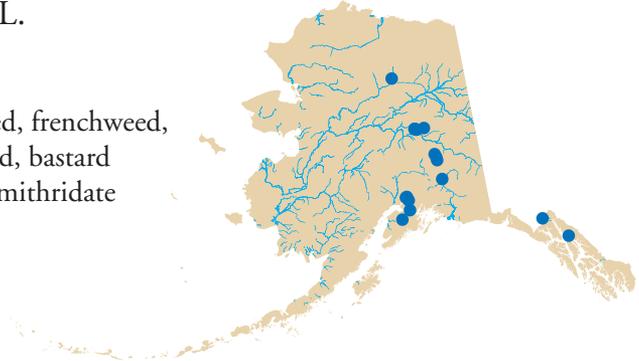
XID Services photo by Richard Old

Similar Species

Shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris* (L.) Medik., included in this book) is occasionally confused with field pennycress but can be distinguished by its triangular fruit and lack of odor.

Management

Hand-pulling should provide effective control for field pennycress if undertaken prior to seed production and



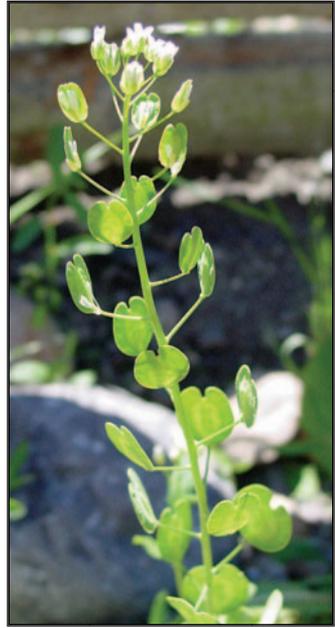
Family: Brassicaceae

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repeated until the seedbank is exhausted, due to its annual habit. Application of herbicide can also be effective.

Notes

This foul-smelling plant was once grown as an oil crop. The odor of field pennycress is the best character for identification even in the seedling stage. It is also known as “fan-weed,” with both common names referring to the disk-shaped seed pods.



National Park Service photo by Penny Bauer

Field pennycress flowers and fruits.