

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,
but may have limited distribution in some counties

Perennial pepperweed
Lepidium latifolium

Other common names: Tall white top, perennial peppergrass, ironweed, perennial peppergrass, broad-

USDA symbol: LELA2
ODA rating: B and T



Introduction: Native to southern Europe and western Asia, perennial pepperweed is now widely distributed in the U.S. Introduction is thought to have originated in contaminated sugar beet seed in the 1930s. Pepperweed readily invades moist saline soils, either in eastern Oregon or in salt marshes along the west coast. It forms dense canopies competing with native grasses.

Distribution in Oregon: Perennial pepperweed is widespread in eastern Oregon with occasional small outbreaks in the western half of the state.

Description: Perennial pepperweed is an erect, semi-woody perennial forb growing from one to six feet tall. Basal leaves are larger than upper leaves, lance shaped, bright green to gray green, entire to toothed. Flowers are white, very small, and form dense clusters near the ends of branches. They produce a distinctive odor. Populations form dense monocultures, rapidly expanding from root fragments and seed.

Impacts: Perennial pepperweed establishes and colonizes rapidly, degrading wetlands, nesting habitat and outcompeting desirable grasses in natural areas and hay meadows. Plants are known to mine subsurface salts, depositing them on the soil surface through leaf drop. Infestations can be so damaging that they can affect cropland values by reducing forage production and increasing weed control costs associated with forage production. Pepperweed can be found in disturbed areas or bare soil, on agricultural land, rangeland and in roadside and irrigation ditches wherever sufficient growing season moisture is available.

Biological controls: No approved biological control agents are available at this time.

