

Hoary Alyssum Identification

Hoary Alyssum is a pasture weed that can cause toxic symptoms in horses. Generally initial exposure will cause swelling of the lower limbs, sometimes with fever or anorexia. In more severe cases, laminitis may develop. In its most severe form, laminitis can result in the loss of the hoof structure and the death of the horse.

Most hoary alyssum toxicity in horses is the result of the plant being baled in hay. Generally horses will refuse the plant in pasture if other more palatable options are available. However, in our practice there is a farm that has had several horses affected by what appears to have been hoary alyssum poisoning from ingestion of the plant while on pasture



Figure 3. Flowers, clustered near the tips of stems and branches, are white with four deeply divided petals.

Hoary alyssum has white flowers. Each flower has 4 petals. The petals are deeply divided to form 8 half-petals



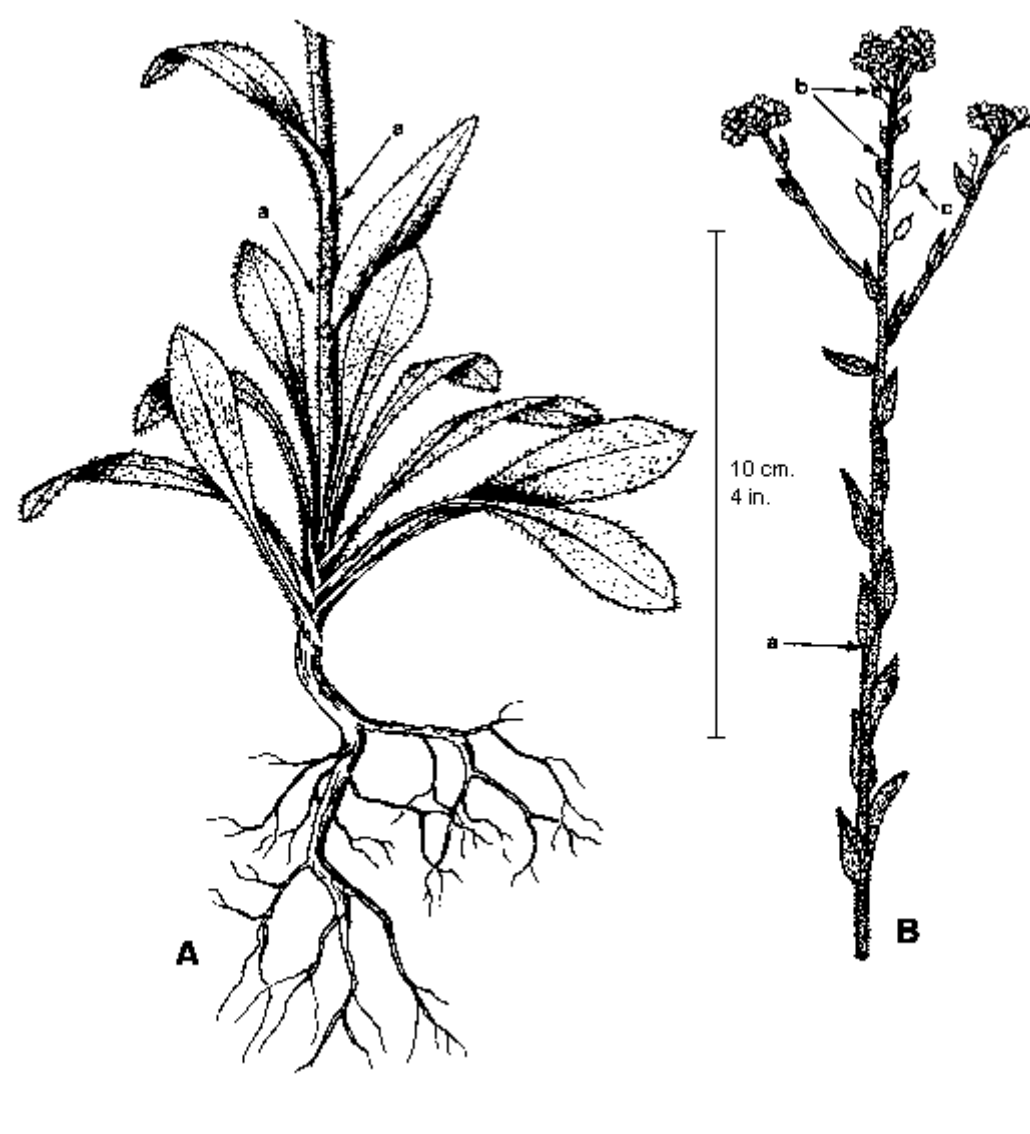
Figure 2. The plant has hairy gray-green leaves and stems.

The leaves are hairy and gray-green



Figure 1. Hoary Alyssum, *Berteroa incana*, is an erect, plant 2 to 3 ft tall, with white flowers.

The plant can grow 2-3 feet tall in pasture, with an abundance of white flowers



These black and white drawings show the plant's cluster of longer green leaves at its base. In addition, there are reddish seed pods that go up the stem of the plant toward the flowers.

If you suspect you have hoary alyssum in your pasture, you will want to take steps to eliminate it. Many common pesticides are effective against it but it is important to have a well thought out plan prior to trying to eradicate it.