

Wednesday
July 30th, 2025

Weed Wednesday

Foothills County

Issue #3



White Cockle- *Silene latifolia* subsp. *alba*

Designation- Noxious

Introduced from Eurasia, white cockle is a short-lived perennial; sometimes biennial that is an invasive species. It thrives in fertile, well-drained soil and full sun and is often found in hayfields.

White cockle can grow up to 120cm tall and can produce many stems per plant that are hairy and swollen at the nodes. The leaves are oval to lance shaped, arranged opposite on the stem. Its fragrant white/pink flowers are arranged in a spreading cluster that have 5 notched petals. White cockle is a dioecious plant, meaning it has separate male and female plants.



Silene vulgaris, Bladder Campion can be distinguished from white cockle through the absence of hair.



White cockle is very competitive as it grows rapidly in the spring and flowers and sets seed throughout the summer, competing with native vegetation.

It emerges in early spring to form a tap root and later lateral roots(rhizomes) that contribute to its spread.

White cockle can cause seed purity issues as the seeds are hard to remove from forage and some grass seeds that are similar in size. Its spread can continue through baled forage that gets transported to a new location. It is a heavy seed producer and once established it can be hard to remove.

Cultivation of this plant is an ineffective method of control as the stem and root pieces can form new plants. Mowing prior to seed set can help to reduce seed production. Mecoprop (in a product mix with 2,4-D and Dicamba) and Tribenuron-methyl are registered chemical controls for white cockle. Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the target plant.

White campion is another name for white cockle. It can sometimes be confused with bladder campion, or night-flowering catchfly. Bladder campion can be distinguished by its lack of hair while night-flowering catchfly has sticky upper stems unlike white cockle.

If you would like more information, please contact Kathleen at Kathleen.mchugh@foothillscountyab.ca or at 403-603-5409.

References- [N_FS-WhiteCockle-Page-1-High-Res.pdf](#)