

Blue mustard *Chorispora tenella*

January 2015

Blue mustard is an erect, annual herb with sticky foliage, and an unpleasant aroma.

Blue mustard is now declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*, with prohibition on its sale and movement, and enforced control in all regions of South Australia.

- **Other common names:** purple mustard, musk mustard, crossflower, Waitchie weed, tenella mustard, bead-podded mustard
- **Family:** Brassicaceae
- **Synonyms:** *Raphanus tenellus*.
- **Origin:** Eastern Europe and Central Asia

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Blue mustard is a tenacious agricultural weed which has proved to be highly competitive overseas.

- competitive weed of wheat and other cereal crops, and dryland lucerne
- has reduced wheat yields by over 50% in some fields in the USA
- can taint milk when eaten by dairy cattle
- is difficult to control in grain crops as it is relatively tolerant to the herbicide 2,4-D
- similarities to wild radish in appearance and behaviour





For more information

Contact your local Natural Resources Centre for information on controlling declared weeds:

www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au

Further weed control information is also available at:

www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa

DESCRIPTION

Habit: erect annual herb growing to 60 cm tall, and covered with minute, glandular hairs that are sticky to the touch, and are odorous. Stems are much branched and arise from the base of the plant. **Leaves:** stem leaves are variable in shape, oval to spear-shaped (see opp. image). Larger basal leaves have toothed or smooth edged margins, and often wither when flowers appear. **Roots:** stout, shallow tap root. **Flowers:** consist of four, minute petals in a cruciferous arrangement emerging from a loose tube of sepals and spread into a corolla about 1 cm wide. **Fruits:** long, upward-turned, segmented, cylindrical pods, which are ribbed on one side and pitted on the other. Single, round reddish-brown seeds to 1.5 mm in diameter are contained in each segment. *Germination period:* autumn-winter.

HOW IT SPREADS

Blue mustard reproduces by seed which can be transported by livestock, contaminated seed and harvest equipment. Viable seed can be produced in as few as 10 days after flowers open.

HABITAT

Blue mustard is commonly found in disturbed areas such as crops, roadsides, waste areas, and pastures. It tolerates a broad range of moisture, temperature and soil conditions.

DISTRIBUTION

Blue mustard is not yet established in South Australia. It is naturalised in north-western Victoria in the Swan Hill – Waitchie region.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Ensure seed, livestock and machinery from interstate are free of weeds. Report unfamiliar weeds to your regional Natural Resources office. Seek control advice if you have this weed.

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