DAME'S ROCKET

(*Hesperis matronalis* L.)

Fall rosette

DAME'S ROCKET

State Noxious Weed List: **No.**

Dame's rocket is an escaped ornamental from Eurasia and most often found along roads, streams, near woods and in thickets. The first introductions to North America began in the 1660s and the plant is now considered naturalized. However, infestations have been increasing rapidly in the north-central states.

Identification and growth form:

Dame's rocket is a biennial or occasionally short-term perennial herb in the mustard family. The plant resembles phlox, but has four petals, not five. The plant grows 2 to 4 feet tall; the stems are erect and often branched. Leaves are alternate, lanceolate, sharply toothed and pubescent. Dame's rocket flowers are found from early May through June, fragrant and generally purple but occasionally pink or white. Seeds are produced in long pods typical of the mustard family. Dame's rocket overwinters as a rosette.

Why is this plant a concern?

Even though this common garden flower has been in the U.S. since colonial times, it is now becoming invasive in many areas of the north-central Plains, especially in woody areas. Dame's rocket is in the same family as garlic mustard, an invasive plant that has invaded woody areas and forests in neighboring states such as Minnesota and Wisconsin. Dame's rocket aggressively competes with native species and has been listed as a noxious weed by the USDA.

How do I control this plant?

Chemical. Herbicides used for mustard control in cropland such as MCPA and 2,4-D will kill Dame's rocket and can be used in wooded areas as long as the herbicide is not applied to the tree bark. Typical pasture and rangeland weed control herbicides such as Tordon, dicamba and Transline will not control Dame's rocket.

Cultural. Hand-pulling or digging Dame's rocket is an effective control measure. Seeds remain in the soil for several years, so sites should be revisited each year to keep the plant from reestablishing.

Biological. No biological control agents or pathogens are available for this weed.