

# Hairy Rocket

(*Erucastrum gallicum*)



**Family name:** Brassicaceae (Mustard family)

**Common name:** Hairy Rocket, Common Dog Mustard, Hairy Mustard



**Hairy Rocket** (*Erucastrum gallicum*) is an annual or biennial plant from the mustard family, found in disturbed habitats such as agricultural fields, roadsides, and gardens in Ireland. It reproduces through seed production and thrives in sunny, disturbed areas. Management strategies include mechanical removal, herbicide use, and cultural practices to prevent establishment. While not considered highly invasive, it can be a nuisance weed in agricultural and urban settings.

**Description** - Hairy Rocket (*Erucastrum gallicum*) is an annual or biennial herbaceous plant characterised by its tall growth, yellow flowers, and hairy leaves and stems. It is typically found in disturbed habitats and can act as a weed in agricultural areas.

**Key characteristics include:**

**Height:** Grows to a height of 30 to 100 cm, though it can occasionally reach up to 1.5 metres in favourable conditions.

**Leaves:** The leaves are lobed and hairy, with the basal leaves being more deeply lobed and larger, measuring 5-15 cm long.

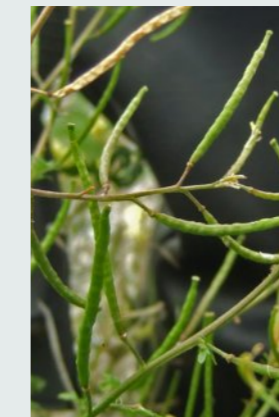


Upper leaves are smaller, narrower, and less lobed. The leaf surfaces and margins are covered with coarse hairs.

**Flowers:** Produces small, bright yellow flowers, each with four petals. The flowers are arranged in elongated clusters (racemes) at the top of the stems, blooming from late spring to early autumn.



**Fruit:** Forms slender, cylindrical seed pods (siliques) that are 2-5 cm long, containing multiple seeds.



The pods are slightly curved and taper to a point.



**Stem:** The stems are erect, branching, and covered with coarse hairs, giving the plant a rough texture. The stems may become reddish or purple with age.

**Root:** The plant has a taproot system, which allows it to access nutrients in poor and disturbed soils.

**Habitat** - Hairy Rocket is native to Europe and parts of Asia but has been widely introduced to other regions, including North America. It grows in a variety of habitats, especially in disturbed areas:

- Agricultural Fields: Often found as a weed in crop fields, particularly in cereal and root crops.
- Roadsides and Waste Areas: Thrives in disturbed soils, roadsides, railway embankments, and vacant lots.
- Gardens and Allotments: May appear as a weed in gardens, flower beds, and allotments, especially where soil disturbance occurs.

The plant prefers full sun and can grow in a range of soil types, including sandy, loamy, and clay soils.

**Status in Ireland** - In Ireland, Hairy Rocket is considered a naturalised species and can be found in disturbed habitats, agricultural fields, and urban areas.

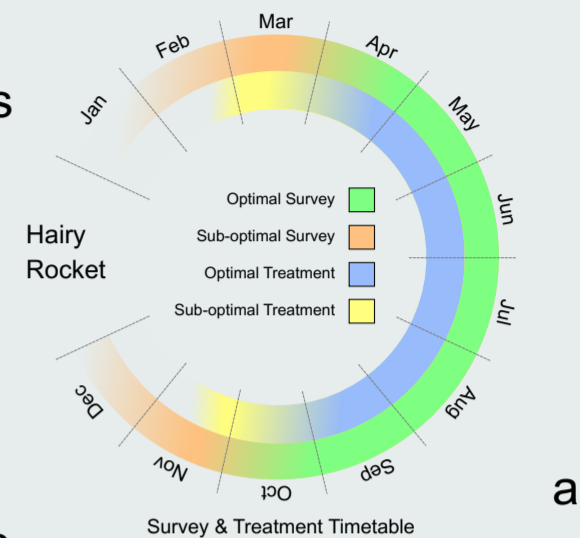
It is not classified as a highly invasive species but is regarded as a weed in some agricultural and horticultural settings.

**Reproduction and Spread** - Hairy Rocket reproduces through seed production:

- Seed Dispersal: The seeds are dispersed by wind, water, and human activities such as agricultural machinery. Each plant produces a large number of seeds that can remain viable in the soil for several years.
- Rapid Germination: Seeds can germinate quickly in disturbed soils, leading to rapid establishment in suitable conditions.

**Management and Control** - Controlling Hairy Rocket involves targeting its seed production and growth:

- Mechanical Control: Hand-pulling, mowing, or cutting before the plant sets seed can help reduce its spread. Frequent soil cultivation can also disrupt seedling growth.
- Chemical Control: Herbicides may be used for larger infestations, especially in agricultural fields. Pre-emergent herbicides can prevent seed germination.
- Cultural Control: Maintaining dense ground cover can help prevent Hairy Rocket from establishing, and crop rotation can minimise its presence in agricultural fields.



**Ecological Impact** - While Hairy Rocket is not considered a major ecological threat, it can still have some impacts:

- Competition with Native Flora: In disturbed habitats, it may compete with native plant species, especially in areas where it forms dense stands.
- Impact on Agriculture: Acts as a weed in crop fields, where it competes for nutrients, light, and water, potentially reducing crop yields.



For further information and free advice, please contact:  
Japanese Knotweed Control Ltd.

Email: [mail@jkc.ie](mailto:mail@jkc.ie)

Tel: +353 (0)86 250 8805

Web: [www.jkc.ie](http://www.jkc.ie)