# New Plant Invaders to Watch For
# Perennial Pepperweed
# (*Lepidium latifolium*)

Mass Audubon
Protecting the Nature of Massachusetts

**The Threat:** Perennial pepperweed is a serious invasive plant problem in the western United States. In the east, it has recently become established in coastal marshes in Massachusetts from northern Plymouth County to New Hampshire. A number of populations have been found inland along highways. Perennial pepperweed can alter soil conditions in a manner that enhances its ability to outcompete and displace native plants and can spread by means of both seeds and root fragments.


Photo: Lou Wagner, Mass Audubon

Flowers are small, white, have four petals, and are borne in dense clusters. Flowering usually occurs in late spring or early summer.

Plants are upright, usually 2 to 5 feet tall, and have alternate branches and leaves.


Photo: Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org
UGA1459434

Leaves are lance-shaped and progressively smaller higher on the stem. The leaf edges are slightly serrated and the leaves are somewhat waxy in appearance.


Photo: Mary Ellen (Mel) Harte, Bugwood.org
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**What to do :** Learn to recognize the distinguishing features of perennial pepperweed shown in the images on this page. If found, immediately report the finding to Lou Wagner, Mass Audubon Regional Scientist, at 978-927-1122 Extension 2705, or lwagner@massaudubon.org.

Perennial pepperweed plants begin growth in spring as a basal rosette.


Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org
UGA5270071


Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org
UGA5270073

Perennial pepperweed can form dense stands that displace native plants, most commonly at the upper edges of coastal wetlands.