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Columbia Shuswap  
Invasive Species Society

# PRESS RELEASE

## Potential Invaders: The Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society urges everyone to be aware of hoary cress and poison hemlock.

The Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society (CSISS) is a charitable non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention, reduction, and management of invasive species in the Columbia Shuswap region.

### Priority Invasive Plant Lists

CSISS and regional land managers updated the Columbia Shuswap regional priority invasive plant lists on April 9th at the annual Land Manager Meeting. The lists help to guide the inventory, treatment, and monitoring of invasive plants in the region. These lists contain six rankings based on how established a species is and their potential impact within the region. In the meeting, hoary cress was discussed as a species to keep at the highest possible alert level. Poison hemlock is a high priority toxic invasive plant to keep an eye out for. CSISS is encouraging everyone to be aware of these species, and report sightings on our website, using the provincial reporting form, or the Report Invasives app on your phone. Follow CSISS on iNaturalist and join our project “2024 CSISS Priority Invasive Plants” to help monitor these invasive species.

### Hoary cress

Hoary cress is one of the province’s top 25 invasive plants and spreads quickly through prolific seed production and rhizome spread. It is commonly spread through contaminated hay and seeds, and prefers open sunny areas such as pastures and meadows. Hoary cress presents a threat to agriculture as it lowers crop yields and can ruin livestock products. Laura Gaster, Field Manager for CSISS, stated “with the development of the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail, this plant has a higher potential to spread into our region. It is important for everyone to keep an eye out for hoary cress and remember to Play Clean Go after being on the trails.” This plant is 10-60 centimetres tall, has blue-green arrow shaped leaves and many small white flowers in clusters at the top of the stem. It has two heart shaped seed pods per flower.



Photo 1: Hoary cress. Photo credit: B Stewart vis ISCBC

### Poison Hemlock

This invasive plant is highly toxic. A small amount of this plant ingested can kill people, livestock, and wildlife. All parts of the plant are poisonous, and can cause recurring skin reactions and respiratory ailments. Poison hemlock is similar in appearance to other members of the Apiaceae family such as carrots, parsnips, wild celery, and Queen Anne’s lace. It has tiny, white, 5 petaled flowers that form a broad umbrella shape. The leaves are bright green, triangular, and have a strong musty smell. The stems are hollow, hairless, and have distinctive purple blotches. Poison hemlock can produce up to 30,000 seeds per plant, which can remain viable in the soil for 3-5 years. If residents see poison hemlock, they should take caution and report the sighting to CSISS on our website, use the provincial reporting form online, or use the Report Invasive app on their phone.



Photo 2: Poison Hemlock. Photo credit: Ansel Oommen, Bugwood.org

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