

Natural Area Preservation
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INVASIVE PLANTS

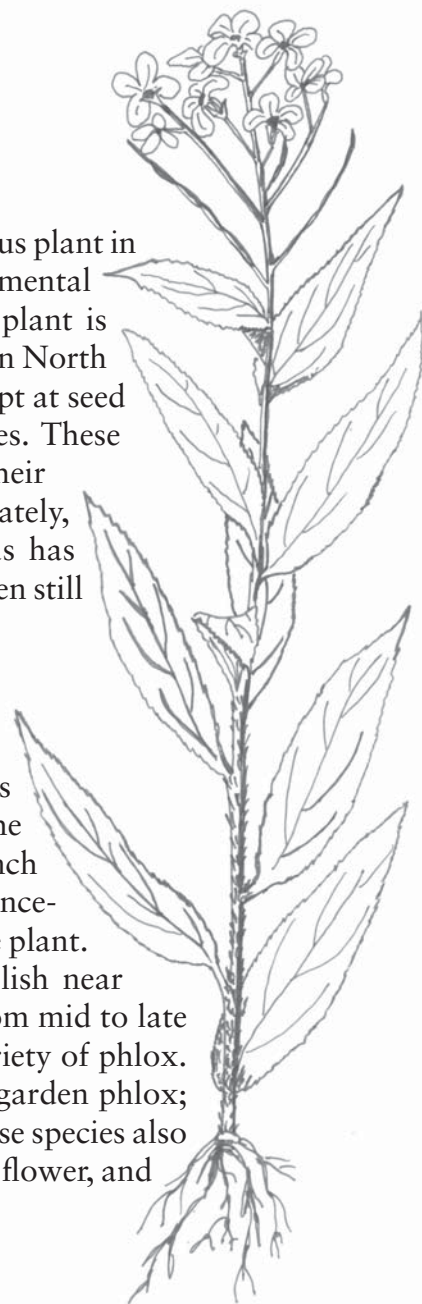
Dame's Rocket *Hesperis matronalis*

History

Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) is a perennial, herbaceous plant in the mustard family, Brassicaceae. It was introduced for ornamental purposes from Europe in the early 1600s. Although this plant is fragrant and attractive, it outcompetes many native species in North America. It has no natural predators or diseases, is very adept at seed dispersal, and has a longer growing season than our natives. These characteristics, so often found in invasives, contribute to their rapid spread at the expense of native biodiversity. Unfortunately, dame's rocket's broad-scale establishment in natural areas has been promoted by the sale of "wildflower" mixes, which often still contain dame's rocket seed.

How Can I Identify It?

Dame's rocket blooms in early summer. Its four petaled flowers can be white, pink, lilac, or purple and are sweet-smelling. The plants reach 2–3 feet tall with loose clusters of ¾-to-1-inch flowers at the top of a single stalk. Leaves are toothed, lance-shaped, have pointed tips, and are larger near the base of the plant. The leaves and stem have coarse hairs and become purplish near the base. Seeds develop in long, narrow pods noticeable from mid to late summer. Dame's rocket is often confused with a garden variety of phlox. Use the flower structure to distinguish dame's rocket from garden phlox; dame's rocket has four petals and garden phlox has five. These species also bloom at different times; dame's rocket has an early summer flower, and garden phlox, a late summer flower.



FACT SHEET

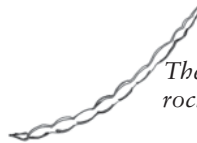
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How Can Dame's Rocket Be Controlled?

- NAP's preferred method of control is hand-pulling.
- Cutting off flower heads before seeds develop prevents further seed dispersal and may be necessary in controlling large infestations.
- Prescribed burning is effective on seedling plants and first year rosettes.
- For more information on control methods visit The Nature Conservancy website at: <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu>



This is a typical mustard family flower. Dame's rocket's flower is an inch wide and ranges in color from white to shades of pink and purple.



The seed pod of dame's rocket is 2-4 inches long.

What Can I Do?

- If you see a small infestation, pull it. When pulling be sure to remove the entire root to prevent resprouting from root fragments. Pulled plants should be bagged and taken to a municipal compost facility to prevent the spread of seed.
- Stay on, and keep pets on, established roads and trails to prevent invasive seed dispersal.
- After visiting an area that has dame's rocket, or other invasive weeds present, clean up before you leave the site! Make sure your clothes, shoes, vehicles and pets are mud and/or seed free.
- Use plants native to southeastern Michigan in upcoming landscaping projects. NAP has a series of brochures to assist you in choosing native plants for your garden.
- Participate in NAP-sponsored volunteer workdays to remove dame's rocket and other invasives from city natural areas.
- Learn to identify dame's rocket and other invasive weeds. Invasive herbaceous plants NAP would appreciate help with are:

garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

bittercress (*Cardamine impatiens*)

knapweed (*Centaurea spp.*)

Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)

lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*)

dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)

golden archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*)

common motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*)

purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)