

# White Cockle

Aka White campion, Evening cockle

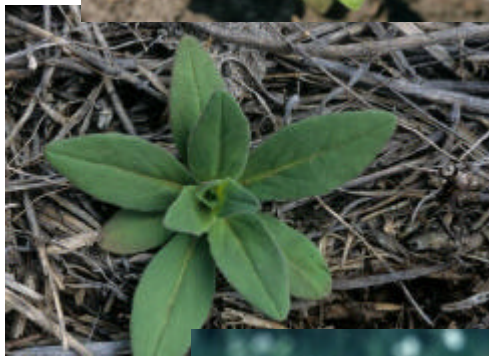
Lychnis alba Syn. Silene alba S. latifolia



**Provincial Designation:** Noxious

**Description:**

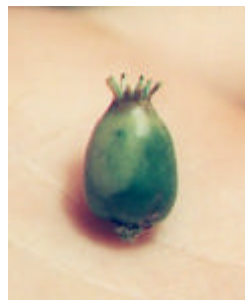
White cockle is a short-lived perennial (sometimes biennial) native of Europe. Plants are either male or female, so not all plants produce seed. The calyx of male flowers has 10 veins, and the female's 20 veins, is longer and inflates with ripening. It prefers full-sun and rich, well-drained soils.



**Stems** are hairy, grow 30 to 120 cm tall, and can be erect or spreading. There can be several stems per plant – crowded plants branch in the upper stems. Stems are swollen at the nodes.

**Leaves** are opposite and lance or slightly oval-shaped with pointed tips. Basal leaves and upper stem leaves are smaller.

**Flowers** are numerous, fragrant and arranged in spreading clusters. The white (or pinkish) flowers have 5 notched petals and only open in the evening. A sticky, tubular calyx surrounds the flower's base. The calyx matures into a fruit with 10 teeth at the tip containing many tiny, grayish seeds.



**Control**

White cockle can be a serious economic problem as its seeds are difficult to separate from alfalfa, clover and some grass crop seeds – and this invader is an extremely heavy seed producer.

Often confused with Bladder campion (no hair, not sticky) or Night-flowering catchfly (hairy, upper stems sticky), white cockle is not sticky on any part of the plant.

This plant emerges early spring, initially forms a taproot, and next spreading lateral roots. Stem and root pieces can sprout to form new plants; therefore cultivation will usually spread an infestation. Frequent mowing will reduce seed production. White cockle shows resistance to a number of herbicides, but early spring applications of dicamba offer some management.

Know how to identify this plant and prevent its establishment.

