

NARROWLEAF BITTERCRESS

[*Cardamine impatiens* L.]

CAIM



Fig. 1

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Fig. 2

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Problem: Native to Eurasia,³ narrowleaf bittercress has the ability to rapidly spread and colonize a variety of habitats,⁶ creating dense stands that outcompete native species.⁵

Habit: Erect, shade tolerant, annual or biennial (Fig. 1).^{1,2,3,5,6}

Reproduction: Prolific seeder; may self pollinate.⁴



Fig. 3

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Leaves: Numerous, 6-20¹ narrow, sharply toothed, sparsely ciliate leaflets;⁶ basal leaves (Fig. 2) can reach 10 cm (~4 in) and can have 3 to 11 leaflets along the rachis; leaflets are generally 3-lobed and lobes are rounded³; leaf bases sagittate to auriculate^{1,2,3,6} or clasping (Figs. 3 and 4).



Fig. 4

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Fig. 5

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Fig. 6

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Stems: 1.5 to 8 dm tall (6 to 30 in);^{1,6} glabrous; stems do not branch near the base of the plant, only above in the inflorescence.³

Flowers: May to September;³ Petals white or lacking,^{1,3,6} up to 2.5 mm (less than $1/10$ in);^{1,6} short-lived³ (Fig. 5).

Fruits/Seeds: 10-24+ seeds per fruit;^{1,3} seeds orange to brown,³ enclosed in long (1½ to 2 cm; ~5/8 to ¾ in) slender capsules (siliques);^{1,3,6} ascending or borne upright on short pedicels^{1,3,6} (Fig. 6); mechanical dispersal where seeds are cast short distances from the plant;^{3,4} flowing water is also a primary means of seed dispersal.^{3,4}

Habitat: Mesic woods,^{5,6} floodplains, roadsides, trails and lawns.³

Similar Species: Pennsylvania bittercress (*Cardamine pennsylvanica* Muhl. ex Willd.),^{3,5} sand bittercress (*C. parviflora* L.), and hairy bittercress (*C. hirsuta* L.) are all most commonly confused with narrowleaf bittercress.⁵ Narrowleaf bittercress is the only species that exhibits sagittate to auriculate or clasping leaf bases (Figs. 3 and 4).⁵ Figure 7 shows the leaf base of Pennsylvania bittercress.



Fig. 7

K. Tenaglia