

Narrowleaf Bittercress (*Cardamine impatiens*)

Identification:

When young, leaves appear rounded, but as it grows, Narrowleaf Bittercress develops pinnately divided leaves that can appear fern and vetch-like at a glance. In mid-summer small inconspicuous white flowers appear, but the long siliques (seed pods) that protrude from the top of the stem stand out more. The plant reaches a maximum height of 2 feet.

Habitat and Spread:

The siliques each have numerous seeds which shoot out when fruit becomes ripe from May to September. Since each pod has up to ~24 seeds, each plant can spread thousands of seeds in its lifetime. It prefers moist soils, and is relatively shade tolerant but will be found on areas of the forest floor that are exposed to some sunlight.



Management Techniques:

Pulling and disposal of seed pods, if present, is ideal. For large infestations, a glyphosate based foliar spray would be effective, but would require multiple treatments of re-sprouts. *C. impatiens* can be annual or biennial, so a populations life cycle can sometimes be unpredictable. Narrowleaf Bittercress is a good invasive poster-child for prevention of spread, its seeds can easily be transported by boots and clothing, so checking equipment for plant material before leaving an infested is imperative.

Native Range and Original Introduction:

Originally from Europe, this species' means of arrival is unknown. It was first recorded in the 1910's in the Northeast and is quickly becoming more common in forest understories.



Photos by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org