



Medium Risk / Impact
in all regions of the Okanagan

Widespread in some areas, but limited distribution in other
locations with significant potential to spread in the region.

Dame's Rocket

Hesperis matronalis

AKA: Dame's Violet, Sweet Rocket, Mother of the Evening, Damask Violet, Dame's Wort, Dame's Gilliflower, Night-Scented Gilliflower, Queen's Gilliflower, Rogue's Gilliflower

DESCRIPTION

- Perennial or biennial herb with a shallow taproot
- Plants grow as single erect stems up to 0.5 - 1.3 m tall
- Stems are hairy and minimally branched
- Leaves are lance-shaped or egg-shaped with serrated edges, 1.5-20 cm long, and have hair on both sides. The leaves decrease in size as they ascend the stem
- Fragrant, purple to white flowers are 15-25 mm in size and have 4 round petals
- Seed pods are up to 10 cm long and contain a row of black seeds

Native to Europe and southwest Asia, dame's rocket has been intentionally planted in North American gardens and has spread across the continent. It can also be found in wildflower seed mixes. Dame's rocket produces a rosette in its first year of growth and a flowering bolt in its second. It blooms from May through June and reproduces primarily by seed. One plant can produce up to 20,000 seeds per season. Seeds are commonly dispersed by birds, mowing or intentional planting.



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Dame's Rocket

HABITAT

Dame's rocket prefers moist soils with full sun but can tolerate a wide range of conditions. It is often found growing along roadsides, fields and disturbed areas. In British Columbia, dame's rocket is most common in the southern half of the province and is abundant in the lower mainland and on Vancouver Island. Dame's rocket is prolific in the North Okanagan and sporadic in the Central and South Okanagan.

LOOK-A-LIKE

Dame's rocket may be confused with native phlox (*Phlox spp.*) or invasive purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). Phlox has five petals and purple loosestrife has five to seven petals per flower, while dame's rocket has only four. These similar species both bloom in late summer or early fall, while dame's rocket blooms in spring and early summer.



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Purple Loosestrife

IMPACT AND RISKS

- Can outcompete native plants and dominate disturbed sites
- Insect-pollinated and may divert pollinators away from native plants
- Can be a host to several plant viruses, threatening crops and native plants

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

The most effective way to ensure that your lands do not become infested with dame's rocket is by prevention. Here are some recommendations to prevent invasion on your property:

- Check the source and contents of wildflower seed mixes; some mixes contain invasive plants
- Do not purchase, trade, or grow dame's rocket; plant native longleaf phlox or silky lupine as suitable alternatives
- Maintain your crops and natural lands in a healthy, vigorous condition to ensure a competitive plant community; competitive perennial grasses, forbs, and shrubs utilize water and nutrients that would otherwise be readily available for dame's rocket
- Regularly patrol your property for dame's rocket plants and immediately control or remove infestations before seed set
- Cooperate with adjacent landowners and encourage them to prevent dame's rocket spread
- Immediately re-vegetate disturbed, bare soils with a suitable seed mixture that provides dense, early colonization to prevent invasive plant establishment
- Do not move contaminated soils to a new area

TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL

- Treatment is most effective before seed set
- Hand pulling is the most effective method to treat dame's rocket; continue treatment over several years to prevent re-establishment
- Chemical control is also an option; before applying herbicides, read the label for full use and precautionary instructions
- For further information on the selection and application of chemicals to protect your crop, contact AgriService BC at 1-888-221-7141 or email AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca
- There are no biological controls (natural insect enemies) for dame's rocket at this time



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