



## A Northern Nevada Homeowner's Guide to Identifying and Managing Tumble Mustard

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**Other common names:** Jim Hill mustard, tall mustard, tall tumble mustard, tumbleweed mustard

**Scientific name:** *Sisymbrium altissimum*

**Family:** Brassicaceae

**Description:** A bushy, much-branched plant that grows up to 5 feet tall, tumble mustard stays in the rosette (ground-hugging) form until it flowers (see photo bottom right). It breaks off and tumbles when dry, spreading seed.

**Leaves:** Lower leaves are large and have deep lobes or leaflets; upper leaves are smaller, narrow and threadlike. The leaves have long hairs.

**Stems:** A single stem grows from the base of the plant and branches above.

**Flowers:** Small and pale yellow with four petals. Blooms in spring and early summer.

**Seeds:** Produces narrow seed pods 2 to 4 inches long filled with many tiny, rust-colored seeds.

**Roots:** Has a thick taproot.

**Native to:** Europe; naturalized throughout the United States

**Where it grows:** Gardens, landscaped areas, rangeland, vacant lots, roadsides and other disturbed or unmanaged sites

**Life cycle:** Winter or summer annual, sometimes biennial

**Reproduction:** Reproduces by seed



Typical plant growing in disturbed site.



Rosettes have deeply lobed leaves and resemble dandelions.

(Above 2 photos by S. Donaldson)

**Control methods:** Tumble mustard is a prolific seed-producer, and a single plant can result in a large infestation the following year. Plants are most easily removed when they are small rosettes. The seeds are long-lived and sprout following soil disturbance.

**Mechanical:** Dig, hoe or pull rosettes. Use mechanical control methods prior to formation of flowers and seeds. Mow to prevent flowering and production of seed. Mulching with a 4- to 6-inch layer of organic mulch can help control the weed.

**Cultural:** Plant desirable vegetation to compete with tumble mustard; minimize soil disturbance.

**Biological:** Can be grazed by livestock when young.

**Chemical:** Apply broadleaf-selective herbicides on young plants.

## References:

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- Mangold, J. and M. Schat. 2009. HPIPM: Tumble Mustard. Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health, U. of Georgia, [http://wiki.bugwood.org/HPIPM:Tumble\\_mustard](http://wiki.bugwood.org/HPIPM:Tumble_mustard).
- UCIPM. 2010/ Tumble mustard, [http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/tumble\\_mustard.html](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/tumble_mustard.html).
- Whitson, Tom D. (editor). 2002. Weeds of the West. University of Wyoming, Jackson, Wyoming.



The lower leaves are long and narrow with a few pointed lobes, as shown above; the upper leaves are smaller and narrow.

(Above photo by S. Donaldson)



Flowers are small, yellow, and have 5 petals.

(Photo courtesy of Mary Ellen (Mel) Harte, Bugwood.org.)



The flowers grow in branched clusters.

(Above photo by S. Donaldson)

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