

Common Baby's-breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*)

Description

Abundantly branched perennial grows to 1 m in height. Seedling plants emerge in early spring and develop only one shoot the first year. Established plants have a deep (up to 4 m), thick penetrating root system. Stems are smooth but covered in a waxy coating, linear leaves are opposite, hairless, with a prominent midvein and grow 2 to 10 cm long. Stems are swollen at the nodes. Plants do not flower until the third year when flower buds develop. Inflorescence of numerous flowers in a large, diffusely branched, leafy-bracted, panicle-like cluster. Each flower has 5 white petals with rounded to somewhat notched edges. Inflorescence is hairless and calyx teeth are 1.5-2.0 mm long. Disperses seed as a "tumble" weed.

Key Identifiers

- ✓ Stems swollen at nodes and covered in waxy coating.
- ✓ Numerous branches in mature plant.
- ✓ Prominent midvein on opposite leaves.
- ✓ Numerous tiny white flowers.

Location in Canada

Alberta, BC, Manitoba, NB, NWT, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan all have reports of escaped plants. Many infestations have been found downwind from cemeteries, escapes from floral arrangements.

Resources

<http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca/Downloads/FS-BabysBreath.pdf>

<http://linnet.geog.ubc.ca/Atlas/Atlas.aspx?sciname=Gypsophila%20paniculata>

Similar species

Other *Gypsophila* species

G. scorzonifolia Inflorescence glandular-hairy and calyx teeth 3-4 mm long. Pink to purple flowers.

G. elegans Annual plant with white or pink petals, 8-10 mm long.

