

White Cockle (*Silene latifolia* ssp. *alba*)

Description

A biennial or short-lived perennial, with branched roots and stems. Grows to 1 m in height. Stems have hairs on lower section that become glandular near flower. Leaves egg-shaped, lower leaves up to 10 cm long, reducing in size upward. Stem leaves opposite. Inflorescence of unisexual (the plants either male or female) flowers, rather showy, evening blooming and scented, several to many in open, spreading, leafy-bracted clusters. Petals 5, white, tips wide, deeply notched into 2 lobes, 2 appendages above each petal in center of flower dividing into 2 lobes Sepals 5, united, forming a downy, sticky tube 15-20 mm. The calyx of the male flower has 10 veins, and the female's 20 veins are longer, and inflate with ripening. Capsules egg-shaped, to 20 mm long, with 10 teeth; seeds about 1.5 mm long, dark bluish-brown, prominently warty-pimplily in concentric rows.



Key Identifiers

- ✓ Flowers white with 5 lobed/notched petals
- ✓ Leaves are opposite and hairy
- ✓ Flowers open at night and have a pleasant odor
- ✓ Stems are hairy and may become almost woody when mature
- ✓ Has a tap root and lateral roots

Location in Canada

White Cockle is reported in every southern Canadian province, from BC to Newfoundland.

Resources

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

<http://linnet.geog.ubc.ca/Atlas/Atlas.aspx?sciname=Silene%20latifolia%20ssp.%20alba>

Similar species

Bladder Campion (*Silene cucubalus*) has similar flower appearance but is not hairy or sticky. Seed capsules will only have 6 teeth. . Calyx has netted veins.

Night-Flowering Catchfly (*Silene noctiflora*) has similar flower appearance but is hairy and sticky. Seed capsules will only have 6 teeth. Calyx has branched veins.