

## LINCOLN WEED



1. Flowering plant.
  2. Root system.
  3. Rosettes.
  4. Plant setting seed.
- (Photos: D. Lund)

(continued overleaf)



# LINCOLN WEED

Lincoln weed, (*Diplotaxis tenuifolia*) also known as sand rocket and sand mustard, is a weed of the turnip family (Cruciferae) which includes many other Western Australian weeds such as wild turnip, wild mustard, and wild radish. An isolated patch of Lincoln weed has been found in Western Australia.

It is a weed of mainly waste land and poorer pastures in the Eyre Peninsular of South Australia and Victoria where it was introduced from Europe, probably as a seed contaminant. It prefers well drained sandy soils often with a high calcium content. It is an almost hairless

perennial, forming a dense bushy rosette with erect branched stems usually 20 to 50 cm high. It displays small bright yellow flowers on short flowering stems from October to February. Each has only four petals, spread out in the shape of a maltese cross. The leaves are lance-shaped, up to 15 cm long with irregular lobes. They are mainly confined to the lower parts of the stems and rosette. The fruit is a pod from one to four cm long by five mm diameter with a small beak-shaped end, the seeds are arranged in two rows. The part nearest the stem opens first, shedding seed. Lincoln weed forms a long

tap root which utilises water from deep underground. This enables it to survive and grow throughout summer.

Seeds germinate in autumn and make slow growth through winter. In the spring they grow more rapidly, flowering in October. In autumn the top growth dies back until next spring.

Lincoln weed is said to be poisonous but stock generally ignore it except at flowering, due to its marked "foxy" odour. If eaten as hay, it will taint milk and meat. It strongly competes with crops and useful pasture plants and the wiry stems make hay cutting difficult. It is difficult to kill with most

herbicides.

Lincoln weed is spread mainly by seeds, although cultivation may break off root fragments, which if large enough, can regenerate to produce new plants.

It is essential that Lincoln weed is not allowed to become established in Western Australia.

**Anyone seeing a plant resembling this weed should contact the Agriculture Protection Board (APB), Baron-Hay Court, South Perth, 6151. Telephone (09) 368 3333 or any country office of the APB or the Department of Agriculture.**