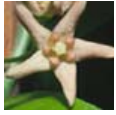




# Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

## Catalog of Species Search Results



[:: Catalog of Species Search](#)



## *Hesperis matronalis*

(Dame's rocket  
Dame's violet  
Sweet rocket )

[Common Name\(s\)](#) | [Full Scientific Name](#) | [Family Name Common](#) | [Family Scientific Name](#) | [Images](#) | [Synonyms](#) | [Description](#) | [Similar Species](#) | [Reproductive/Dispersal Mechanisms](#) | [Distribution](#) | [History of Introduction in New England](#) | [Habitats in New England](#) | [Threats](#) | [Early Warning Notes](#) | [Management Links](#) | [Documentation Needs](#) | [Additional Information](#) | [References](#) | [Data Retrieval](#) | [Maps of New England Plant Distribution](#)

### COMMON NAME

Dame's rocket  
Dame's violet  
Sweet rocket

### FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Hesperis matronalis* L.

### FAMILY NAME COMMON

Mustard family

### FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Brassicaceae

### IMAGES



Close-up of  
white flowers



Habit



Basal rosette



Flowers being  
pollinated by  
moth



Incursion

## NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

**Synonyms:** None

## DESCRIPTION

### Botanical Glossary

*Hesperis matronalis* is an erect, herbaceous biennial or perennial that grows 0.5-1.25 m (1.5-4 ft.) tall. The alternate leaves are lanceolate to deltoid-lanceolate and are 5-10 cm (2-4 in.) long. They vary from having short petioles to being sessile. The leaf margins are denticulate. The leaves are pubescent above and below.

The fragrant flowers can vary in color from purple to pink to white. The flowers appear in late May to June and are borne in terminal racemes. They have 4 petals and are about 2 cm (0.75 in.) in size. The siliques (fruits) are 5-10 cm (2-4 in.) in length and are somewhat constricted around the many seeds.

Page References Bailey 449, Fernald 712, Gleason & Cronquist 196, Holmgren 179, Magee & Ahles 560, Newcomb 138, Peterson & McKenny 84,226. See reference section below for full citations.

## SIMILAR SPECIES

*Phlox* spp. Picture of a species of *Phlox*

*Hesperis matronalis* is often mistaken for *Phlox* spp. *Hesperis matronalis* can be distinguished from *Phlox* spp. by its flowers with four separate petals and alternate leaves. *Phlox* spp. have opposite leaves and five fused petals.

## REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

The seeds of *Hesperis matronalis* are spread mechanically when the dehiscent fruits open. They are often planted by gardeners as part of "native" wildflower mixes.

## DISTRIBUTION

*Hesperis matronalis* is native to Europe. It is now distributed

throughout Canada and much of the United States. The only states which do not have this plant are Hawaii, Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida.

## HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

*Hesperis matronalis* has been present in this country for so long that most people think it is native. It was most likely introduced in the 1600's for use in gardens as well as for medicinal purposes. It has spread rapidly due this planting and its prolific seed production.

## HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

Early Successional Forest  
Edge  
Floodplain Forest  
Herbaceous Wetland  
Open Disturbed Area  
Pasture  
Planted Forest  
Railroad Right-of-Way  
Roadside  
Vacant Lot  
Wet Meadow  
Yard or Garden

*Hesperis matronalis* is frequently found in riparian or wetland habitats, as well as rich open woods. It is also found along roads and in gardens, where it is still planted.

## THREATS

The biggest threat of *Hesperis matronalis* is that many people think that it is a native wildflower. It is planted in gardens, and is often sold in "native" wildflower mixes. These plants crowd out native vegetation due to their great numbers of seeds.

## MANAGEMENT LINKS

[Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources](#)

## DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

Documentation required: A specific photograph or mounted snippet of the habit or the flowers.

Best time for documentation: Spring, early summer.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Integrated Taxonomic Information System](#)

Has general taxonomic information about the species.

[The PLANTS database](#)

General information and a map

[Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources](#)

General information including control

[Virginia Tech Weed ID Guide](#)

Description and images

[www.invasive.org](#)

Images and references

[Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources](#)

An article aimed at gardeners

## REFERENCES

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## DATA RETRIEVAL

Select a task by clicking the radio button and then click "Subm

**Selection."**

- Formatted display as table
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Submit Selection

**MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND**

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- The whole New England area
- One or more states
- One or more counties
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