

March 2012 Guess that Plant

Last Month's Plant:



Teesdalia nudicaulis (L.) R, Br. Sheppard's Cress

March's **Guess that Plant** was one of our naturalized European mustards. Sheppard's cress as the specific name suggests, the stem on this little mustard is naked. The leaves are formed as a tiny ring of lobed basal rosette. The four parted flower with tiny white petals quickly transforms into a shovel shaped capsule not too different from the larger penny cress, but Sheppard's cress's silicle's are only about 1/2 as large. Like many mustards, *Teesdalia* is a spring flowering plant that persists into the early summer when its seeds mature and are spread onto the dry sandy roadside and waste places that's habitat.

Mary Hough (1983) shows Ocean and Monmouth County as the limits of its distribution. I've seen the plant in great numbers where space is available south of Brick Twp., Lacey (Rt 530), Waretown (Rt. 9), Eagleswood (Stafford Forge), New Gretna (Rt. 9), and Port Republic (Rt.9). Current field work by the FNJP extends this plants range into Atlantic and Cape May County and it may occur in Cumberland County as well, indicating a mobile and expanding population.