

### Current sites within the UK

For more information on this species visit our website

Illustration by Fred Rumsey photograph by Simon Williams

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**Tower Mustard**  
*(Arabis glabra)*

## Tower Mustard (*Arabis glabra*)

**DESCRIPTION:** A tall, slim, grey-green plant with small creamy flowers at the top of the stem that can be up to a metre in height.

**LIFECYCLE:** Biennial, flowering May to July. Germination generally takes place in the spring and for the first year the plants exist as basal rosettes. Flower stems are formed the following spring. Seedpods ripen by July, but can remain present and produce seed for several months (up to February has been recorded)

**HABITAT:** It usually grows on poor chalky or sandy soils, in open situations.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Present in Europe, N. Asia, North America and Africa, introduced to Australia. In the UK, present in East Anglia and the West Midlands.

**UK STATUS:** Classified as Endangered, and is therefore considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.

**UK RARITY:** The current range occupied is only 15% of its total historic area; present at 35 sites in the UK.

**REASONS FOR DECLINE:** Habitat destruction including agricultural improvement, and urban development, abandonment of traditional extensive grazing and inappropriate verge cutting. Decline of practices resulting in ground disturbance.

**PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW:** Listed as a Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

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### HOW TO SURVEY?

Individual flowering plants are relatively easy to distinguish and count. If possible an assessment of the non-flowering rosettes should be made as these indicate the potential of the site for regeneration and the future health of the population.

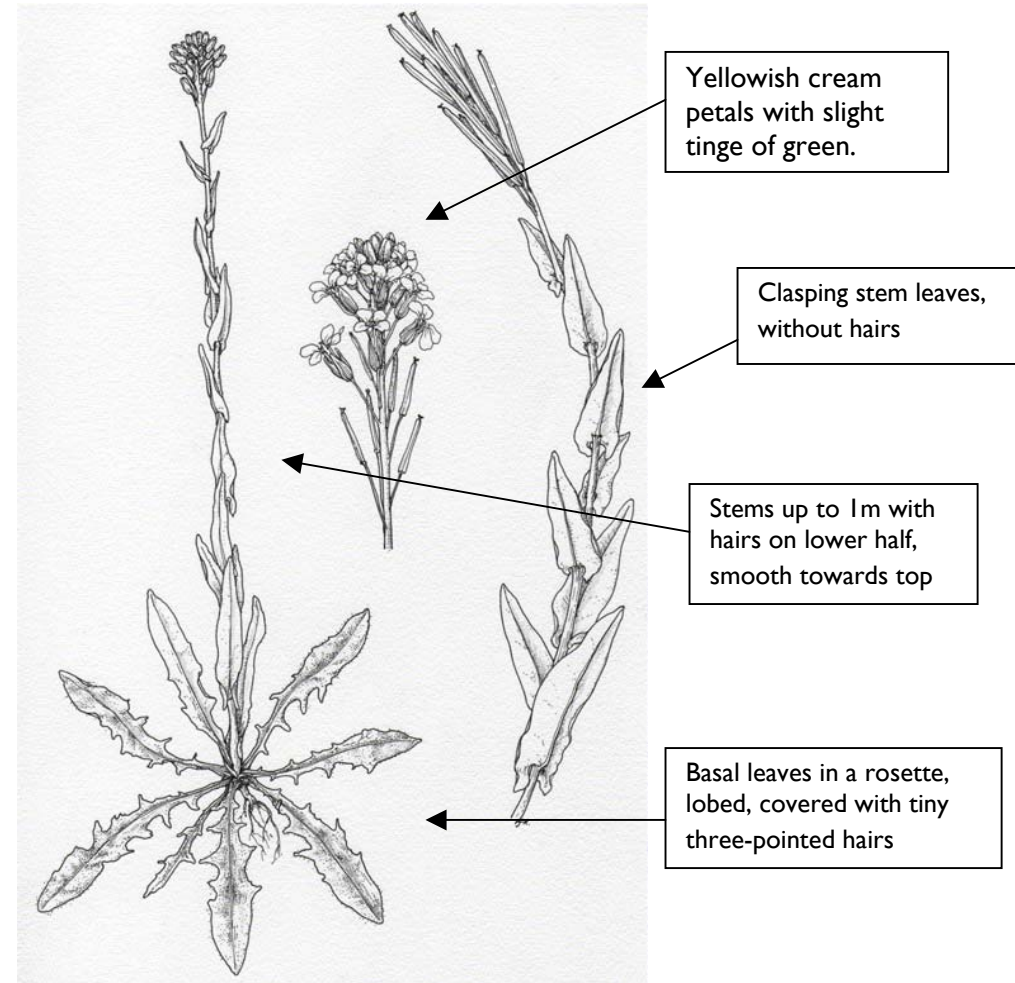
**TIME OF YEAR:** Flowering stems present May to July, although rosettes may be present throughout the year.

**WHAT TO RECORD:** Numbers of plants, area occupied and whether flowering or not. General condition of surrounding habitat (eg encroaching scrub, choking vegetation etc)

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### HOW TO MANAGE HABITAT?

Annual cutting of vegetation, with removal of cuttings should keep the sward open enough to encourage Tower Mustard. Rotovation of soil will encourage the germination of seeds and allow populations to colonise new areas. In highly productive soils this may have to be regularly repeated to minimise competition from other vegetation. Grazing works best with cattle, particularly where they graze areas heavily, poach the soil and are then removed, allowing the plant to colonise areas of bare soil.



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**WHEN TO CARRY OUT WORK?** Cutting between January and February, soil rotovation between December and February.

**HOW TO RESTORE TO LOST SITES?** This is best done by removing tall, shading vegetation, cutting and removing any herb growth and stripping and lightly rotovating the soil