

Purple Crownvetch (*Securigera varia*)

Appearance

Vetch is a vine grows low to the ground. It can form thickets, but may also be found as a single plant. Vetch leaves are usually a dark green and growing oppositely to one another.



A thicket of purple crownvetch (vetch) (*Securigera varia*) in a field. Photo courtesy of [Richard Gardner, Bugwood.org](#).



A stem of vetch against a red concrete wall. The contrast clearly shows the opposite orientation of the leaves, as well as their general shape. Photo courtesy of [Dan Tenaglia, Missouriplants.com](https://www.missouriplants.com/), [Bugwood.org](https://www.bugwood.org/).

Flowers

Vetch flowers in the summer. The flowers are white, pink, and/or a pinkish-purple. They appear visually similar to clover flowers. Vetch flowers are usually larger than clover flowers.



An up-close image of a vetch flower, showing the details of the petals and flower structure. Photo courtesy of [Mary C Legg, Mary C Legg, Bugwood.org](#).



Vetch flowers shown in various conditions. Their placement at the end of the stem should be noted.

Photo courtesy of [Jan Samanek, Phytosanitary Administration, Bugwood.org](#).

Seeds & Fruit

Seed pods are segmented and appear at the end of the stem. The seeds are light brown and less than 0.3 inches long. They are long, round, and flat.



The above are vetch seeds in a laboratory environment. Note the light brown color and long, oval shape. Photo courtesy of [Ken Chamberlain, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org](https://www.bugwood.org/).



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The seed pods (fruit) of a vetch plant grow at the end of the stem. Photo courtesy of [John Cardina, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org](#).

Management

Vetch spreads through both seeds and rhizomes, meaning that it is very aggressive in its growth pattern. We currently manage it through hand removal.

Revision #4

Created 10 November 2025 18:38:20

Updated 16 November 2025 20:28:00