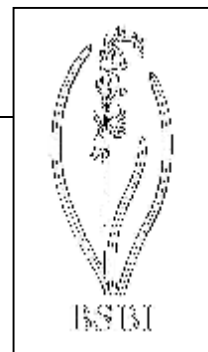


Plant Crib



HIRSCHFELDIA INCANA* / *BRASSICA NIGRA

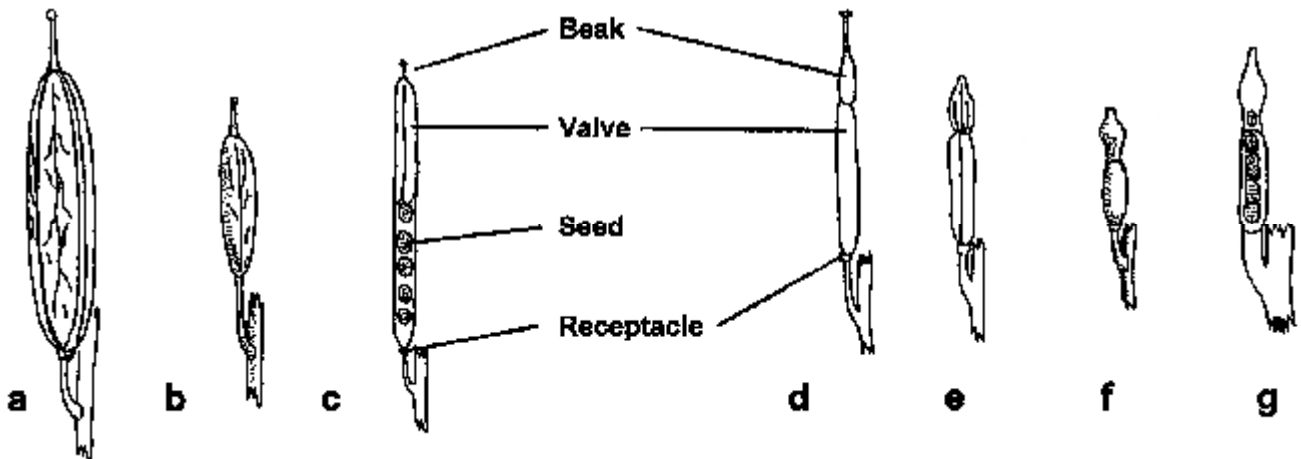
Hirschfeldia incana is widespread as a casual in England and Wales (rare in Ireland and Scotland) and is likely to continue spreading. It is a tall yellow crucifer with appressed fruits which looks remarkably similar to *Brassica nigra*, and was frequently confused with it, mainly because the 'veins-on-the-valves' character used in some keys was difficult to interpret. Though variable, the plants are quite distinct. The most useful differences are set out below, the different beaks to the fruit being the most diagnostic character.

	<i>Brassica nigra</i> L.	<i>Hirschfeldia incana</i> (L.) Lagr.-Foss.
Stem and leaves	Glabrous, glabrescent or sparsely hairy below with coarse hairs	Glabrescent to densely, softly hairy below, glabrous above
Fresh petals	(7-)9-13 mm long, yellow	5-10 mm long, pale yellow
Fruits	8-25(-33) mm long (note 1) × (1.5-)2-4.5 mm wide	7-16 mm long × 1-1.5(-1.8) mm wide
Valves of fruits	(6-)7-24(-28) mm long, strongly keeled with a rounded prominent central vein and fine weak lateral veins (note 2)	(4-)5-9(-11) mm long, with a very weak central vein, lateral veins absent (note 2)
Beak of fruits	2-5(-6) mm long, sterile, narrowly conical to linear	3-6.5 mm long, (0-)1(-2) seeded, swollen, tapering to a persistent style c. 1 mm long at tip
Seeds	1.3-2.0 mm, round, grey, brown or black	0.9-1.4 mm long, ovoid to sub-globose, brown

Notes

1. Measured from the base of the valve to the tip of the persistent style.
2. Much more easily observed on ripe, dry fruit.
3. *Brassica nigra* beak occasionally swollen by insect larva (pers. comm. E. A. Pratt)

Plant Crib



Fruits of *Brassica nigra* (a-c) and *Hirschfeldia incana* (d-g) selected to show variation in shape, size and, (a) strong central vein and weak lateral veins on dried fruit, (b) weak veins in fresh fruit, (c) seeds in fruit (d) shape when immature, (e) weak veins on dried fruit, (f) absence of veins on fresh fruit, (g) seeds in fruit and beak.

Reference Rich, T. C. G. (1988). *Irish Naturalists' Journal* 22: 531-532.