

Downy brome-Cheatgrass

Colorado Department of Agriculture

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Identification and Management



will over winter as a seedling. In the spring it will bolt and produce seed, using valuable moisture and shading desirable plants. Once Cheatgrass reaches maturity and dries, it becomes a major fire hazard. Large infestations can increase fire frequency in rangelands. Seed viability ranges 2 to 5 years for cheatgrass, increasing the chances of taking over a disturbed site.

Identification and Impacts

The key to effective control of Cheatgrass preventing the establishment of the plant through proper grazing and management techniques. If the plant has become established, using an integrated management approach can prove to be an effective control method. Details on the back of this sheet can help to create a management plan compatible with your site ecology.



Downy brome or Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is an annual or winter annual, native to the Mediterranean region. Cheatgrass ranges in height from 2 to 36 inches. Each plant contains multiple stems that are erect in nature. The inflorescences are born at the end of the stems, and are multi-branched. They appear in a slender, dense, and usually drooping manner. At maturity, they appear greenish purple in color. The spikelets are slender, 3/8 to 3/4 of an inch long and are nodding. The awns on the end of the spikelets are usually 3/8 to 5/8 of an inch long. The sheaths of the leaves are flat blades and densely covered in with soft hairs. Cheatgrass reproduces solely by seed. The root system is fibrous and fleshy.

Cheatgrass is designated as a "List C" species on the Colorado Noxious Weed Act. It is required to be either eradicated, contained, or suppressed depending on the local jurisdictions managing this species. For more information, visit www.colorado.gov/ag/weeds or call the State Weed Coordinator at the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Conservation Services Division, 303-239-4100.

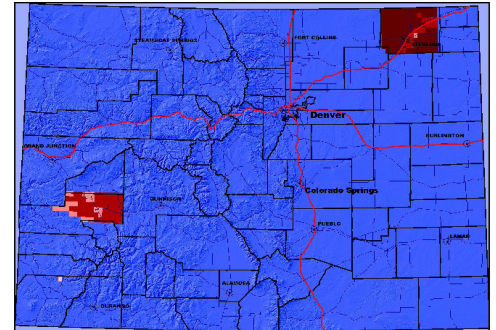


Key ID Points

Habitats for Cheatgrass include; roadsides, waste areas, misused pastures, rangelands, cultivated fields, and eroded sites. When plants are green animals will graze as forage. When the plant dries, the sharp seed can injure grazing animals getting caught in the mouth, nose, and eyes of the animal. It is a competitive grass with native grasses and forbs, because it germinates in the fall and

Bromus tectorum

Downy brome 2002 Quartergrid Survey Distribution and Abundance in Colorado 121,024+ infested acres (two counties reporting)



Photos © From Bottom left; (Next 2) Steven Dewey, Utah State University; Richard Old XIV Services Inc.; Chris Evans, River to River CWMA; All Bugwood.org; Map Crystal Andrews, Colorado Department of Agriculture

**CULTURAL**

Preventing the establishment of Cheatgrass by planting desirable grasses and forbs can prove to be an effective control method. Properly maintaining grazing lands will also reduce the risk of infestations. For specific seed recommendations contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Services for seed mixes.

**BIOLOGICAL**

Research is currently being conducted on certain molds to be used as a biocontrol. But currently there is not any approved biological control agents approved for the use on Cheatgrass. For more information please contact the Palisade Insectary of the Colorado Department of Agriculture at 970-464-7916.

**MECHANICAL**

Fire, tillage, mowing and grazing have been proven to help reduce plant populations once established. The key to effective control is to prevent seed production and/or spread.

Integrated Weed Management:

Preventing the establishment of Cheatgrass through proper grazing management techniques proves to be the most effective control method. If infestations are already established using a combination of mechanical and chemical control methods proves to be effective control options, following these treatments with cultural control methods will reduce the size of infestations.

HERBICIDES

NOTE: The following are recommendations for herbicides that can be applied to range and pasturelands. Rates are approximate and based on equipment with an output of 30 gal/acre. Please read label for exact rates. Always read, understand, and follow the label directions. The herbicide label is the LAW!

HERBICIDE	RATE	APPLICATION TIMING
Imazapic	4-10 oz/Acre	Fall application prior to a hard freeze is optimum or during early spring growth. Add non-ionic surfactant 0.32oz/gal water or 1qt./100 gal water.
Glyphosate *Non-selective herbicide*	4-5 qts/Acre or 4-5 oz/gal water	Apply in fall or early spring. Add non-ionic surfactant 0.32oz/gal water or 1 qt./100 gal water.

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