

Cheatgrass

Bromus tectorum

Description

It was accidentally introduced to North America through contaminated shipments.

Habit

Erect-stemmed annual grass that grows 20-70 cm (8-25 inches) in height.

Leaves

Covered with soft short hairs. 2-4 mm (0.08-0.16 inches) wide and up to 20 dm (8 inches) long. Ligules are 1-2.5 mm long.

Stems

Thin, flexuous, and pubescent.

Flowers

Inflorescence is a dense, drooping panicle 1.5 - 8 inches long and pale green to purplish in color. Panicles measure 5-20 cm (2- 7.75 inches) long, have numerous branches, nodding and retain an open quality. Panicles bear from 3-8 drooping spikelets that are 2-3.5 cm long. Awns on each





floret are barbed.

Fruits and Seeds

Plants produce in excess of 300 seeds. Possibility of producing 450 kg of seed per hectare (400 pounds per acre) with about 330,000 seeds/kg (150,000 seeds/pound). Seeds remain viable in the seed bank for 2-5 years.

Habitat

Native to Europe, the northern rim of Africa, and southwestern Asia. Found in rangelands, pastures, prairies, fields, waste areas, eroded sites, and roadsides. Most commonly found on coarse textured soils on B and C horizons of eroded areas and areas low in nitrogen.

Reproduction

By seed that germinates in the autumn, overwinters as a seedling, then flowers in the spring or early summer.

Similar

Brome (*Bromus* spp.).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Fire, mowing, grazing, tillage, and inter-seeding of competitive native plants have all been shown to reduce populations. Can be effectively controlled using any several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate. Rabbits and mice will feed extensively on this species as do migratory grasshoppers (*Melanoplus sanguinipes*). Plants can often be infected with head smut (*Ustilago bullata*).

Credits

The information provided in this factsheet was gathered from the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England and the U.S Forest Service Weed of the Week publication. Individual species images that appear with a



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