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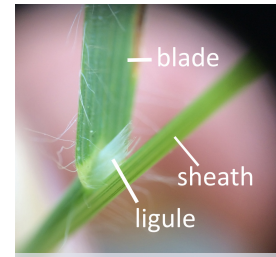
Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum* L.) is a winter annual grass in the Poaceae family, also known as downy brome.

Mature plants reach up to 24 inches tall. The stems are smooth but the leaf blades and sheath are hairy (downy). The ligules are fringed, short and membranous. The culms range from five to 90 cm long, can be prostrate or vertical, and have fine short hairs. Its fibrous roots can be up to 60 inches long, but the majority of root biomass is within first 12 inches of the soil surface. Roots are efficient at absorbing soil moisture, allowing cheatgrass to grow quickly early in season, while other plants are still dormant. Green up can occur twice per season. Cheatgrass has an unique spectral signature during seed set and senescence when it turns reddish purple. During these shoulder growing season events, it is easily detectable from other vegetation with satellite imagery.

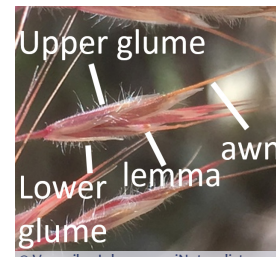
The flower is a simple one-sided panicle that characteristically flops over and hangs, branches and is open. Spikelets are usually terminal. Usually there are five to many florets; it has perfect flowers. The upper and lower glumes are usually unequal in length and shorter than florets; the lower glume ranges from 4 to 14 mm in length and is one veined. The upper glume is three-veined. The plant disarticulates above the glumes. The lemmas are usually downy, narrowly lanceolate with sharp tips and about 9 to 12 mm long. Usually there are five to many lemmas. Awns are usually present and range from 10 to 18 mm long. It is a prolific seed producer, capable of two seed crops per season. Seeds need to be buried in soil or litter and have fall moisture to germinate. The fall seed crop has greater reproductive success than spring. Seeds lack dispersal anatomy so fall close to parent plants but transport readily with animals, people and equipment. Seed longevity is about three years. Both inbreeding and cross breeding occur.

Cheatgrass is one of the most competitive non-natives in the Western US. It thrives in arid, semi arid, and cold environments. Colorado's high elevation range is not an issue for cheatgrass; plants were recently detected as high as 9,500 feet. It exhibits phenotypic plasticity and genetic diversity, making it highly adaptable to a variety of conditions, likely due to multiple introductions. Its presence has significant negative impacts throughout the West. Most notably, it alters fire regimes and thus engineers a positive fire feedback loop that favors its growth over other plants. This feedback loop is why cheatgrass forms monocultures throughout the West.

It is often confused with Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*), which has denser more compact spikelets, shorter awns, and changes from green to gold through the growing season.



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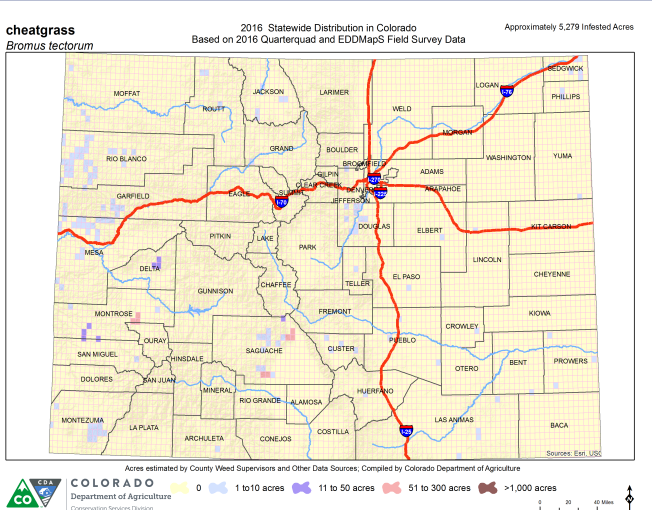
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Cheatgrass

Bromus tectorum L.

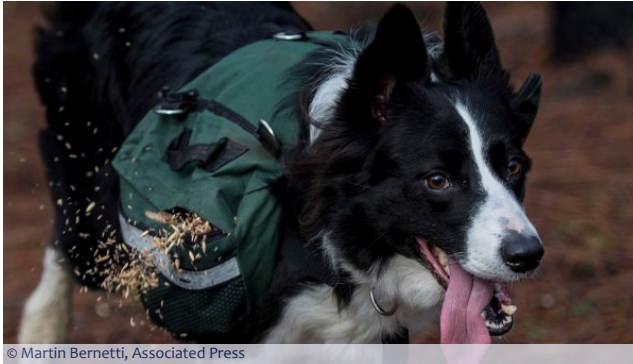


Key ID Points

1. Downy leaf blades, sheaths, ligules
2. Glumes are unequal size, lemmas are downy
3. One-sided panicle that droops, red-purple during seed set & senescence
4. Fibrous roots

Integrated Weed Management Recommendations

Effective integrated management means using a variety of eradication methods in the same site along with restoration, prevention of seed production and dispersal, and monitoring. Maintain robust healthy native landscapes. Restore degraded sites. Avoid soil disturbance. Prevent seed production and seed dispersal, e.g. on contaminated equipment. Rest sites until restored. Modify land use practices. Use methods appropriate for the site, including land use practices.



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CULTURAL

Biological soil crust is a soil health indicator of arid and semi arid sites; crusts inhibit cheatgrass seed germination. Aerial spread and cultivate soil crust where it is absent. Aerial and drill seeding bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*) and Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*) with vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae; these are drought tolerant natives that are highly competitive against cheatgrass but require mycorrhizae. As these grasses establish and cheatgrass wanes slowly introduce additional species such as thickspike wheatgrass (*Elymus lanceolatus*), winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) in the plant interspaces in subsequent years. Be cautious when purchasing seed as cheatgrass is often a contaminate, especially in mixes. Use seed pillows to disperse seeds.



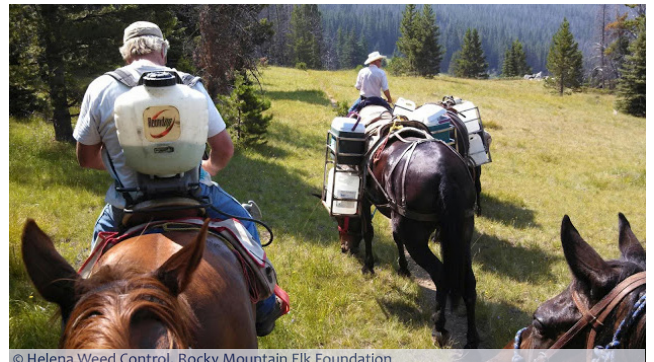
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BIOLOGICAL

Sheep and cattle will select green cheatgrass which also affects desired cool-season grasses. Properly managed grazing can improve vigor of desired species and directly reduce cheatgrass. Post-fire grazing management varies depending on site potential and objectives. Currently there are no biological control agents for cheatgrass authorized in Colorado. For more biocontrol information, visit the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Palisade Insectary website at: www.colorado.gov/ag/biocontrol

MECHANICAL

Mechanical methods are best for residential areas and small infestations. Mowing and chopping are not recommended; they leave roots behind, stimulate flower production, disperse seeds, and expand the size of the infested area. Collect, bag, and dispose of or destroy flowers; seeds can mature and germinate if left. Tilling must be deeper than 6 inches to work. Prescribed fire applied before seed maturity, (late spring or early summer), may kill seeds; the trick is to get green cheatgrass and litter to carry fire and at a hot enough temperature to destroy seeds and seedlings. Always combine prescribed fire with cultural methods, timed appropriately, and base it on site conditions and other plants present. Monitoring and adaptive management are critical if prescribed fire is used as a tool for control.



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CHEMICAL

Pseudomonas fluorescens D7 inhibits cheatgrass and is currently approved by EPA and Colorado. NOTE: Herbicide recommendations to control cheatgrass in pastures and rangeland are found at: <https://goo.gl/TvWnv9>. Rates are approximate and based on equipment with an output of 30 gal/acre. Follow the label for exact rates. Consult local turf and ornamental experts for residential settings. Always read, understand, and follow the label directions. The herbicide label is the LAW!

Cheatgrass

Bromus tectorum L.



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