

Animals

Please remember to check your dogs, cats, horses and other livestock if they've been out in grass that's gone to seed. The little awns on the seeds can be very hard to find, will burrow into the skin and may cause skin related problems.



While Cheatgrass provides good quality forage when used by livestock in the late fall and early spring it can have negative effects when consumed with seed heads present, as these seeds contain long stiff awns that often puncture the mouth and throat tissue of livestock.

Long Term Management

Once established, Cheatgrass can be very persistent, the integration of cultural methods of good prairie management along with herbicide controls and reseeding can be successful management tools. Disturbing the soil by disking, tilling, excess grazing, mowing, off road vehicles, heavy grazing all favor Cheatgrass establishment. Herbicides are the current recommendation for control, they should be used with care and caution to surrounding plants and waterways. Always read the label for exact instructions on use and plants to protect.

For more information check out the Weed Management Handbook at <http://www.uwyo.edu/uwe/programs/weed-management-handbook.html> or call your local Extension Office.

For more information on this topic or other Agriculture, Horticulture, 4-H, Community Development Education, Cent\$ible Nutrition or Food and Nutrition Safety topics call the U.W. Laramie County Extension Office at 307-633-4383.

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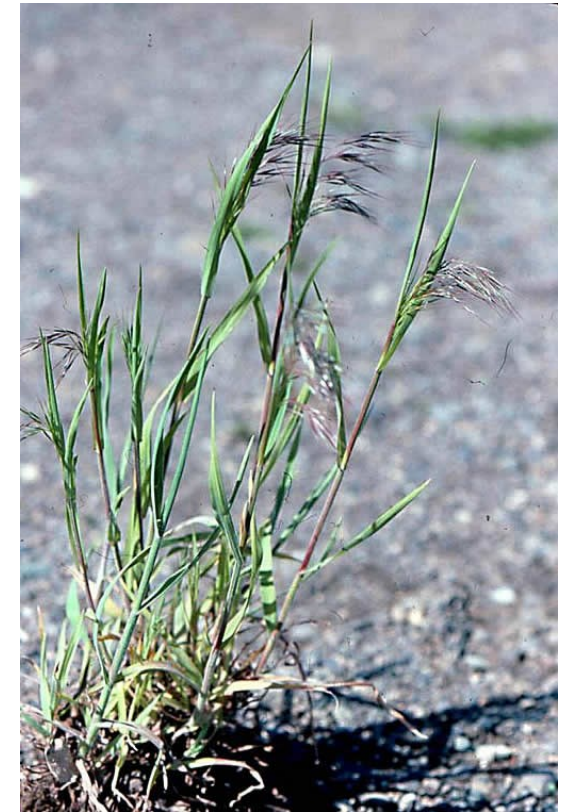
The average annual moisture for Wyoming can range from 6 to 15 inches per year including the moisture in snow. We are always in some level of drought or close to going into a drought.

Helpful Phone Numbers all 307 area codes
Laramie County Conservation District tree and wind break program 772.2600.
Cheyenne Audubon Society 634.0463.
Household Chemical Disposal 637.6440.
Animal Control 635.1453.
WY Game and Fish 1.800.842.1934.
County Weed and Pest 245.3213.
City-County Health Dept. 633.4090
Wyoming Livestock Board 777.7515
Brand Inspection 777.7515
Barnyards to Backyards Magazine
www.barnyardsandbackyards.com

The University of Wyoming, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Laramie County cooperate. The University is an equal opportunity affirmative action institution.

Cheatgrass

Non-native Invasive Annual Grass



Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is devastating western natural areas, pastures and rangeland on a very large scale.

This invasive grass outcompetes desirable vegetation and wildflowers leaving little to no wildlife habitat, grazing or native flowers.

It also greatly increases the risk for fast moving wildfires.

Cheatgrass: What is the problem and how to control it.

The Problem:

An introduced species from Eurasia, that thrives in cool moist conditions, it is considered a winter annual that germinates in the fall when temperatures are in the 40's. It will continue to grow until temperatures drop below 28 degrees. It has a very flexible lifecycle and will continue to germinate in the spring under cool wet conditions.

Cheatgrass becomes a highly competitive one grass monoculture, suppressing native vegetation, with negative impacts. Such as; loss of grazing, wildlife and pollinator habitat. Livestock will not eat Cheatgrass once it becomes mature and importantly it creates a serious fire hazard.

Cheatgrass is shallow rooted and creates a mat of roots and litter that steals available resources of water and soil nutrients enabling it to out compete native grasses and flowers.

Cheatgrass changes from green to purple to straw brown as it matures.



The purple stage is an indicator of hazardous fire conditions within two to three weeks.

Cheatgrass can produce up to 15,000 plants and up to 18,000 seeds per square yard.

Controls

Herbicide Treatment

Several years of research on specific herbicides used to control Cheatgrass in the Western U.S., appears to not hurt the existing native grass or native flowers.

There are a couple herbicide treatments to control Cheatgrass. The most popular one used is Plateau®. It will reduce or eliminate Cheatgrass over a couple years. This herbicide will also control Dalmatian Toadflax and leafy spurge. It is applied in the fall after Cheatgrass has germinated, without adverse effects on cool or warm season perennial grasses. Always read the label for complete instructions. . 1995 Response of Cheatgrass to nitrogen and water. Journal of Range Management 48:290-297.



Mowing or grazing

This is typically not an effective control, especially if mowed at the straw colored stage, as this spreads viable seeds unless bagged and disposed of. If mowed or grazed in the, pre-seed, green stage Cheatgrass will still produce seeds, just fewer.

For small areas repeat mowing or grazing every 10 to 14 days will over time reduce or eliminate Cheatgrass.

Cheatgrass litter creates a safe habitat for Cheatgrass seeds.

The Time to control this grass is in late October, early November.

Fire as a control—maybe

A carefully done spring prescribed fire can reduce plant litter accumulation and some of the seed banked in the soil, timing is critical.

A caution to burning; Cheatgrass fires burn very fast and controls need to be in place to contain it.

Without post fire control with a herbicide and/or reseeding, Cheatgrass will reestablish itself.

Reseeding

If reseeding is called for such as after a fire there are native wheatgrass species to use in mixes they are; Streambank Wheatgrass, Crested Wheatgrass, Pubescent Wheatgrass, Thickspike Wheatgrass, and Western Wheatgrass. Don't forget to add some wild flower seeds to your mix.

The Laramie County Conservation District has a small tow-behind to-till drill seeded they rent out for reseeding small areas.

Results

With treatment pastures and prairies will start to recover and rebound in plant diversity (grasses and wildflowers). Without treatment the problem will become worse.

Please call your local Weed and Pest for herbicide recommendations and their cost share program.

At this time herbicide treatment is still considered the best course of action.

Your biggest investment is your land.