

Cheatgrass (Downy brome)

Bromus tectorum

Grass family

Key identifying traits

- ❑ An upright to somewhat spreading grass growing 3-24" tall
- ❑ Leaf blades are flat and the entire plant is softly hairy at all stages of growth
- ❑ Leaves start out light green, turning a silvery sheen and then reddish-purple
- ❑ Drooping, one-sided seed heads (panicles) are dense, 2-6" long & become brittle as the plant dries, shattering & dispersing seeds with their long, barbed awns (this is the one that gets in your shoes & socks, pet's ears & paws, undercarriage, etc!)

Biology and ecology

- Usually a winter annual with a fibrous root system, germinating in fall, growing through winter & maturing in late spring or early summer
- It is a native of Eurasia; first sightings in the U.S. occurred in the mid-1800's and now widespread throughout the continent
- Frequently colonizes overgrazed range, abandoned farmland, rights-of-way and many dry waste areas

Control

Prevention - Learn to identify plants; start monitoring early in the season or in fall; clean equipment & use clean seed & feed

Biological - *Crown rot* is being explored in dry sites

Cultural - Do not overgraze! Vigorously growing desirable grasses/other cover crops will help; crop rotation may be effective

Mechanical - Mowing is not effective unless it is done continuously & very low; small areas can be pulled or dug; tillage at appropriate times can be effective

Chemical - There are many products on the market listed for control of cheatgrass whether in a crop situation or non-crop areas. Timing is important: refer to the [PNW Weed Management handbook](#) for specific chemical recommendations

Where found - Widely scattered throughout Stevens Co and Washington

