

# Cheat grass

Poaceae

*Bromus  
tectorum*

Cheatgrass thrives in disturbed and undisturbed sites. Because it emerges sooner than other plants, it has earned its name for 'cheating' other vegetation out of moisture.

**Origin:** Europe

**Description:** 3 to 18 inches tall. Also known as downy brome, downy cheat and bronco grass. Introduced winter annual cool-season grass densely covered with short hairs and drooping seed heads



**Color:** Dark green with a hint of purple turning reddish-brown to light tan at maturity

**Roots:** Fibrous and shallow

**Stems/Culm:** Erect, slender from branched base

**Leaves:** 2 to 6 inches long with flat blade densely covered with soft hairs



**Flowers:** Inflorescence is a drooping 1-sided panicle with florets 5-8 and ½ to ¾ inch long that appear from March thru May and die shortly thereafter. Lemma awned

**Seeds:** 300 seeds per plant with nodding, finely hairy mature seedheads. Fall growth can overwinter as a seedling

**Viability:** 2 to 5 years

**Toxicity:** Although it is considered non-toxic to livestock and the single most important spring forage per extent of area covered and forage volume produced, mature seeds readily penetrate livestock eyes and mouths and dog's ears and noses causing sores and damage. By late Spring, it is no longer a valuable forage



**Lookalikes:** Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*)  
Rattlesnake brome (*Bromus briziformis*)

Reported to be the dominant species on more than 100 million acres of the intermountain west, cheatgrass is unique in that it occupies a dual role as a serious weed and important early season forage.

It is mature and dry by early summer which alters native fire regimes. It outcompetes native shrubs and grasses after a fire because they cannot recover as quickly. It grows in almost any soil and adapts to varying precipitation.

On the backside of this sheet are cheat grass management recommendations.

## **Recommended range and pasture management methods:**

### **Cultural**

Establishment of selected, aggressive grasses can be an effective cultural control. Contact your local Extension office or Natural Resources Conservation Service office (NRCS) for seed mix recommendations.

Proper grazing management will stimulate grass growth and keep pastures healthy. Healthy pastures are more resistant to invasion. Bare spots caused by overgrazing are prime habitat for weed infestations.

### **Mechanical**

Fire, mowing, grazing, tillage, and inter-seeding competitive species have all shown promise in reducing cheatgrass populations. Long lasting control requires a combination of chemical, physical, vegetative suppression and proper livestock management.

### **Biological**

Biological control is limited. Rabbits and mice will feed extensively on the seedlings as will migratory grasshoppers. But there is no long-term biocontrol agent available.

### **Herbicides**

The following recommendations can be applied to range and pasturelands.

<b><u>Herbicide</u></b>	<b><u>Rate</u></b>	<b><u>Application Timing</u></b>	<b><u>Comments</u></b>
Plateau (imazapic)	4 to 6 oz/acre	Fall application as a pre-emergent prior to a hard freeze is optimum for control.	Use a methylated seed oil surfactant (MSO) at 0.32 oz/gal water or 1 qt/100 gal water. A 12 oz rate may cause injury to some cool season grasses.
Panoramic 2 SL (imazapic)	4 to 8 oz/acre	Apply pre- or post emergent in late summer or early fall.	Use a MSO surfactant at 0.32 oz/gal or 1 qt/100gal water. A 12 oz rate may cause injury to some cool season grasses.
Rejuvra (indaziflam)	5 oz/acre	Apply in August to March.	Can be tank mixed with Glyphosate, Panoramic 2SL or Plateau. Add a non-ionic surfactant @ 0.32oz/gal water or 1 qt/100 gal water if tank mixing. A pre-emergent: Will NOT kill established growing plants.
Laramie 25DF (rimsulfuron)	4 oz/acre	An early post-emergent option. Must be activated with rainfall and applied when soil temps are cool.	Moisture must arrive within 2-3 weeks of application. Add a non-ionic or MSO surfactant @ 0.32oz/gal water or 1 qt/100 gal water.
Prowl H2O (pendimethalin)	<b>Short Term</b> (2-4 months) 2.1 qts/acre <b>Long Term</b> (6-8 months) 4.2 qts/acre	A pre-emergent: Will NOT kill established growing plants.	Can be tank mixed with Glyphosate, Panoramic 2SL or Plateau. Spray solution may stain porous surfaces. Length of control is dependent on weather conditions.
Glyphosate <b>Non-selective</b> 41% concentrate min.	16-24 oz/acre	Apply in fall or early spring.	Add a non-ionic surfactant @ 0.32 oz/gal water or 1 qt/100 gal water. Use caution when applying near grasses or other desirable vegetation.

**ALWAYS READ, UNDERSTAND, AND FOLLOW HERBICIDE LABEL DIRECTIONS**

**The herbicide label is the LAW**