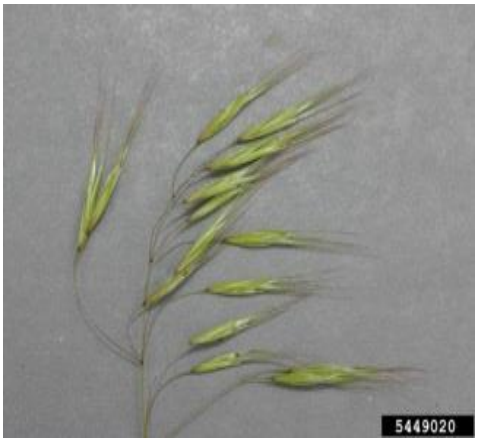
Cheatgrass Fact Sheet

Bromus tectorum — *Poaceae* Family



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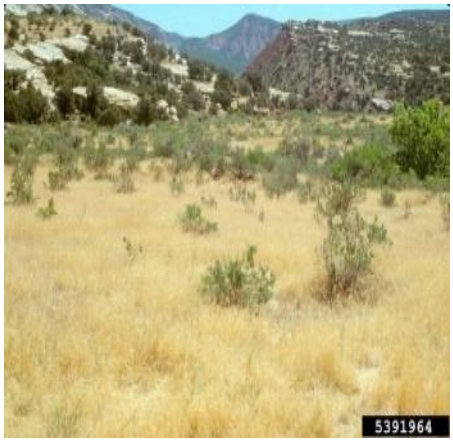

John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org

Distinguishing Features:

❶ **Flowers:** Flower heads, which include many small flowers arranged in spikelets, emerge from inside the stem and gradually grow taller. Flowers appear light green to yellow and may be covered in small, fine hairs.

❷ **Seeds:** The fruit is a tiny grain, hidden within tiny bracts and grouped into small clusters that hang on the end of branches along a drooping seed head.

❸ **Leaves:** The leaf sheaths and blades are covered with soft short hairs. The leaves are 0.08-0.16 inches wide and up to 8 inches long.

❹ **Flowering Time:** Flowering occurs from May to June.

❺ **Life cycle:** Cheatgrass is a winter annual that reproduces by seed. Germination occurs in fall through winter to early spring, depending on the climate and rainfall.

K. George Beck and James Sebastian, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

Impacts:

- Cheatgrass presence increases the chances of ignition, rate of spread and expanding the season of wildfires, reducing the interval between re-occurring fires.
- Cheatgrass spreads extremely quickly. It rapidly outcompetes most native plant species and forms dense monocultures virtually anywhere it colonizes.
- Cheatgrass seeds can cause injury to the ears, eyes and mouths of pets such as dogs and horses as well as to humans.

Control:

- Mechanical control is considered too costly and ineffective to be a viable control method.
- There are currently no biocontrol agents approved to combat Cheatgrass in the US.
- The most effective method currently available to control Cheatgrass is through the use of nonselective herbicides such as glyphosate. These herbicides will kill any plant they contact, so caution is critical to the health of the ecosystem.

**Please visit our website for references sourcing this information.*

SALT LAKE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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