



NWT COUNCIL
ON INVASIVE SPECIES,
PESTS, AND PATHOGENS



Smooth brome .
Photo: Johanna Stewart



Smooth Brome

(*Bromus inermis*)

IMPACTS

Smooth brome can invade natural habitats and form thick mats of rhizomes that prevent other species from growing.

INTRODUCTION

Native to Europe and Asia, it was introduced to North America as a forage crop and is commonly used for pasture and hay production. It is also sometimes used in roadside seed mixes.

PREVENTION

Prevent the spread of invasive plants by washing mud and seeds from vehicles or equipment that have been used in infested areas, paying special attention to tire tread and wheel wells.

MANAGEMENT

Difficult to remove once established. Best practice for controlling the spread of smooth brome involves cutting it down at the early development stage, before flowering. Other management techniques include fire and herbicides.

BIOLOGY

Smooth brome is a tall perennial grass. It spreads by underground rhizomes as well as by seed. It is cold, hardy and tolerant of various soils and moisture conditions.



Smooth brome. Photo: Michael J. Oldham

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IDENTIFICATION

Stem: smooth, upright, and unbranched, growing 0.4-1 m tall.

Leaves: wide and long, often with a “W”-shaped wrinkle across the blade.

Seeds: upright, branched seedhead. Seed casings (lemmas) are hairless or have very short hairs.



Smooth Brome (*Bromus inermis*). Photo: Michael J. Oldham

RANGE

Smooth brome can be found in every province and territory in Canada. It is commonly found around communities and along highways in the NWT.

HABITAT

Often found in disturbed areas and spreading along roadsides and ditches. Under optimal conditions, it can spread and invade natural habitats.



Pumpelly brome (*Bromus pompellianus*). Photo: Bruce Bennett

SIMILAR SPECIES

Smooth brome can be confused with the native fringed brome (*Bromus ciliatus*) or Pumpelly brome (*Bromus pompellianus*). Both native species have hairy seed casings, unlike the hairless casings that give smooth brome its name.



Fringed brome (*Bromus ciliatus*). Photo: Michael J. Oldham