Ventenata (Ventenata dubia)

Ventenata was first discovered in the U.S. in Washington and Idaho in the 1950's. It was first documented in Montana in the early 1990s and is increasing rapidly.

Characteristics:
- Height 6-18 inches
- Stem has dark red/black nodes
- Long slender ligule with tapered tip
- Panicle is open; branches diverge from the main stem at ~90° angles

*Priority 2A state listed noxious weed

Phragmites (Phragmites australis spp. australis)

Phragmites is a tall-statured perennial grass that grows in moist areas. Identification is difficult because a native sub-species that grows in Montana looks very similar.

Characteristics:
- Height 6-15 feet
- Plume-like flowers, purple or golden hue
- Stoloniferous or rhizomatous roots
- Grows in moist areas
- Invasive stems green, native stems reddish

*Priority 1A state listed noxious weed

Medusahead (Taeniatherum caput-medusae)

Medusahead was first discovered in the U.S. in 1887 and found in Montana in 2013. It is not palatable to livestock and infestations decrease forage availability.

Characteristics:
- Height 6-24 inches
- Long-awned spike
- 1-4” awns
- Awns are twisted, stiff, minutely barbed
- Shiny green-yellow color

*Priority 1A state listed noxious weed

Cheatgrass (Bromus tectorum)

Cheatgrass was first discovered in the U.S. in the late 1890’s and is problematic in much of the West. It reduces biodiversity and forage availability and increases wildfire risk.

Characteristics:
- Height 4-30 inches
- Entire plant is hairy
- Panicle occurs in a “nodding” fashion
- Inflorescence changes from green to reddish-purple as plant matures

*Priority 3 state regulated plant
Invasive Grasses

Invasive Grasses?

What exactly is an invasive grass?

Much like noxious weeds, invasive grasses are non-native plants that the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) has identified as having the potential to be detrimental to agriculture, the economy and the environment.

MDA sets criteria for listing plants as “noxious,” and those selected are placed on the state noxious weed list. According to Montana’s County Noxious Weed Control Act, it is illegal for landowners to let noxious weeds “propagate or go to seed on their land.” This Act requires landowners to manage plants that are listed on the state noxious weed list.

Invasive grasses currently on Montana’s State Noxious Weed list:

- Medusahead (Taeniatherum caput-medusae)
- Ventenata (Ventenata dubia)
- Phragmites (Phragmites australis spp. australis)

Awn—A stiff bristle that is attached to the seed or floret
Inflorescence—The complete flower head of a plant 
Ligule—a membranous scale on the inner side of the leaf sheath at its junction with the blade 
Node—Joint in the stem or a point of attachment of a leaf or branches of a stem 
Panicle—A loose branching type of inflorescence 
Spike—A type of inflorescence in which flowers are attached to the plant without any stalks

For the most up-to-date version of the Montana Noxious Weed List, visit: agr.mt.gov

Glossary

Japanese brome is native to southern and south-central Europe and Asia. It was first identified in the U.S. in 1861 and negatively impacts perennial grass biodiversity.

Characteristics:
- Height 4-24 inches
- Awns are straight or curved outward
- Hairs occur on lower portion of stem, similar to cheatgrass only hairier
- Awns not usually hairy
- Panicle is open and similar to cheatgrass; droops to one side, however seeds are more plump than cheatgrass causing the panicle to droop entirely to one side.

*This plant is NOT a noxious weed; however, it is considered invasive.

Japanese brome (Bromus japonicus)

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