

Seeing Yellow?

Narrow Leaved Hawk's Beard is an annual or winter annual broadleaf weed that reproduces by seed only and is a topic of conversation between landowners and Ag Fieldman. The first flush of this weedy species has been very noticeable throughout Special Areas, often covering acres of disturbed soil with yellow dandelion-like flowers. While this species is a serious weed of perennial forages, it is not a noxious weed by law and therefore is not required by the Weed Control Act to be controlled. Ag Fieldman strongly suggest control through a number of different methods.

The most serious infestations of NLHB occur in weak crop stands. The best defense against this weed is to encourage strong crop stands through fertilization, seeding slightly heavier and applying pre- and postharvest herbicide applications. Pre-seeding and fall stillage can also destroy the over-wintering rosettes, but tillage should be used as a last resort and done so with extreme caution to prevent soil erosion. This species is sometimes confused with perennial sow thistle.



Downy Brome: A Triple Threat

Asia that is now popping up throughout Special Areas. This prolific seed pro- as noticing a noxious grass within another grass takes a trained eye. At this



tle that can lead to lump jaw. Talk depending on the location. about a triple threat!

seed only and is most active in the cool roots help it to compete with perennial vegetation for moisture in dry grass-

by over grazing. Downy Brome can produce a second seed crop per season from additional tillers producing from 25 to 5000 seeds per plant. It needs to absent. Sheaths are closed to near the top germinate either early in the spring or late in the season because hot dry weather will kill the seed. The somewhat consistent rainfall this spring and summer appears to have been advantageous for this species in the Special Areas.

Downy Brome is not a strong competitor with established perennials, however, established Downy Brome will out compete perennial seedlings. It is strongly associated with frequent fires as it accumulates litter which dries completely by summer and is highly flammable. Downy Brome seeds can withstand low intensity fires.

Downy Brome is an annual grass native to the Mediterranean and southwest Identification of this pest is often not made until a significant population exists, ducer is not only a noxious weed that time of year however, the plants are going to seed and are more obvious due must be controlled under the Weed to their red/purple color as they mature. If you identify this species pull it imme-Control Act, but it also presents a fire diately, bag and burn it. Please also let your Agricultural Fieldman know so risk and causes mouth irritation in cat- they can monitor the infestation. There are chemical control options available,

> How to identify Downy Brome: Downy Brome reproduces through Stems: Are erect and can be slightly hairy and can range in height from 10 to 70 cm. season, rapidly developing lateral and There may be 1 to 20 tillers (stems) per plant. vertical fibrous root systems. These The entire plant turns from green to purple to brown/tan a s it matures. Leaves: Are 4-16 cm long and 2-4 mm wide. lands, especially when accompanied Ligules are about 2 mm and membranous with entire or jagged edges. Auricles may be and finely hairy. Seedlings have bright green, hairy leaves Flowers: Downy brome has perfect flowers which are usually closed and self-pollinating, but is also capable of cross-pollination. The inflorescence is a drooping, one-sided panicle with 5 to 8 florets. Florets are 2-4 cm long including awns and are usually purple at maturity.



Downy Brome infestation within the Special Areas. The red tinge of the mature plants make the plant easily identifiable this time of year.



Notes from the Field – July 2017

See it. Pick it. Bag it.

Not all weeds require chemicals for control. There are a number of noxious weed species that are best to pick, bag and burn. This strategy is best for annuals or biennials with shallow root systems, prior to seed set. If you pick noxious weeds contact your Ag Fieldman for disposal.











Dame's Rocket

Downy Brome

Scentless Chamomile

White Cockle

Blueweed

Scout for Cutworms!

There are several pest cutworm species affecting Canadian Prairie crops. Much of the time, their impact is negligible. However, from time to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a field or widespread across a large region, they can last years and, most importantly, can cause significant economic damage. A brand new resource for identifying <u>Cutworm Pests of Crops on the Canadian Prairies</u> has been released.



Economic Thresholds for Cutworms

Crop	Pale Western Cutworms	Red Backed Cutworms
Cereals	3-4 larvae/m ² (Note at 8.4 larvae/m ² caused 25% loss in wheat and 30 larvae/m ² caused 100% loss)	5-6 larvae/m ²
Flax	4-5 larvae/m ²	4-5 larvae/m ²
Canola	4-5 larvae/m ²	4-5 larvae/m ²
Peas	2-3 larvae/m ²	2-3 larvae/m ²
Dry Beans/ Soy beans	1 small (<2.5cm long) larva per meter of row or 20% of plants cut	1 small (<2.5cm long) larva per meter of row or 20% of plants cut
Corn	N/A	5-6 larvae/m ²

There are several pest cutworm species affecting Canadian Prairie crops. Much of the time, their impact is negligible. However, from time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a tot to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a tot to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a tot to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to small areas in a tot to time, outbreaks occur. These can be localized to the tot tot tot tot. These can be localized to the tot tot tot tot tot tot tot. These can be localized tot tot tot tot tot tot. These can be localized tot tot tot tot tot. These can be localiz

Newly hatched larvae of both pale western and red backed cutworms feed on the surface of newly-emerging shoots and furled leaves of young plants causing small holes. Plants damaged in this manner may or may not recover. Older larvae move along rows cutting off leaves and sever plants just below the soil surface. They occasionally pull and eat severed plants underground. When scouting, look for gaps or expanding thin areas within rows, especially on sandy hilltops and south facing slopes. For up to the minute cutworm survey results, or to report a field with cutworms, visit the <u>Alberta Pest Monitoring Network</u>.

Notice!

SECTION OF HIGHWAY DITCHES MOWED FOR NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL

As part of a complete weed control program, roadside ditches with noxious weeds CANNOT be baled. Any bales containing noxious weed species may be confiscated and disposed of to prevent weed spread as per the *Weed Control Act*. In an effort to control several species, including but not limited to baby's breathe, leafy spurge and white cockle. Carillion will be mowing shoulder to fenceline ditches in certain sections of primary and secondary highways prior to weed seed set. If you have any questions about haying ditches on primary or secondary highways, please call your local Ag Fieldman.

SPECIAL AREAS BOARD

Notes from the Field - July 2017

Fusarium in the Special Areas!

You may have noticed your Ag Fieldman poking around your wheat fields over the last two years, collecting head and stubble samples for Fusarium Head Blight testing on behalf of Alberta Agriculture & Forestry. The results are finally tallied from this province wide survey and unfortunately it's not looking good. There has been an increase in Fusarium graminearum positive samples across the province, including positives within the Special Areas. Of about 950 fields sampled in 2016, 26.5% were positive for F. graminearum. Compare that to 2010-2011 when there was only 11.1% Warm, humid weather conditions will be favorable for Fusarium spore development infection, and 2001-2003 where there was only 6.8% and we are seeing a definite in July. Pair that with the winds we have been experiencing and there could be pospread of the disease.

Fusarium Head Blight caused by Fusarium graminearum and/or several other species, is a serious fungal disease affecting wheat, barley, oats and corn. Not only does this disease reduce yield and grade, it can have a significant impact on the quality of grain intended for feed, malting, biofuel and brewing industries. Fusarium-damaged kernels (FDK) contain mycotoxins such as deoxyniovalenol (DON) that are poisonous to livestock and humans. Since the early 1990's it is estimated that losses in Canada range from \$50- \$300 million annually.

To help combat this growing problem Fusarium graminearum was added to the Agricultural Pests Act in 1999. This designation means that the owner or occupant of land is responsible for taking measures to prevent the establishment and to control the disease. Management of this disease

includes reducing the risk of spread through crop residues by using healthy, fusarium free seed, rotations that include at least two years between host crops, increasing seeding rates, staggering seeding dates and managing water on irrigated crops. For more management practices see the Alberta Fusarium graminearum Management Plan.



tential for serious spread of the windborne spores. Cereal crops will be most susceptible when spores come into contact with newly emerged heads, but the decision to spray will need to be made prior to this stage to be effective. To aid in assessing your risk you can check the Alberta Agriculture Fusarium Head Blight hourly risk assessment maps by clicking here.





Reminder!

2% Liquid Strychnine is available until August 1, 2017

for Richardson's Ground Squirrel control at the Hanna,

Oyen and Consort District Offices during regular hours.

Canadian Beef Industry Conference

August 15-17, 2017—Calgary, AB

Western Canada Conference on Soil **Health & Grazing**

December 5-7, 2017—Edm., AB

Notice! LOCAL ROADSIDE GRASS CONTROL

Ratepayers are advised that Special Areas Road Crews will commence roadside grass control on July 15 on all local roads. Please Schedule your ditch having accordingly. If you have any questions please contact your local road foreman.

For more information, go to www.specialareas.ab.ca or visit us on our Facebook page and Twitter @SpecialAreas.



Notes from the Field – July 2017

Upcoming Ag Events in the Special Areas





Your Agriculture Fieldmen

JESSE WILLIAMS

DON HOGAN



(403) 854-5625/(403) 854-1114



(403) 664-3618/(403) 664-5585

JUSTINE SIMPSON



(403) 577-3523/(403) 575-5525

We offer support for programs including:

- Plant identification & noxious weed control
- ◆ Grazing management & strategies
- ◆ Pest management & controls
- ♦ Growing Forward 2
- Environmental Farm Plans
- ◆ Shelterbelt programs & planning
- Animal predation concerns
- Equipment rentals including RFID tag readers & pest traps
- Concerns related to *Soil Conservation Act, Weed Control Act, Agricultural Pest Act, Animal Health Act,* and other legislation.

Special Area No. 2	Special Area No. 3	Special Area No. 4
Hanna District Office	Oyen District Office	Consort District Office
(403) 854-5600	(403) 664-3618	(403) 575-3523

Π

Π

Π

Π

Π

For more information, go to www.specialareas.ab.ca or visit us on our Facebook page and Twitter @SpecialAreas.