

# Foxtail Barley

## *Hordeum jubatum*

**Common name:** Foxtail Barley

**Scientific name:** *Hordeum jubatum*

**Family:** *Poaceae*

### Description

Foxtail Barley is a perennial tufted plant that is native to North America including Yukon. The stiff, sharp awns of Foxtail Barley act like slivers, creating a hazard for wild and domestic animals including dogs by lodging in the noses and mouths, which may lead to infection. Though not technically an invasive plant, it behaves like one.

### Range in Yukon

Known throughout the territory south of and including the Porcupine and Peel river drainages.

### Similar Species

Foxtail Barley commonly hybridizes with Slender Wild Rye (*Elymus trachycaulus*) producing a sterile but perennial hybrid (*x Elyhordeum macounii*) that is found throughout Yukon.

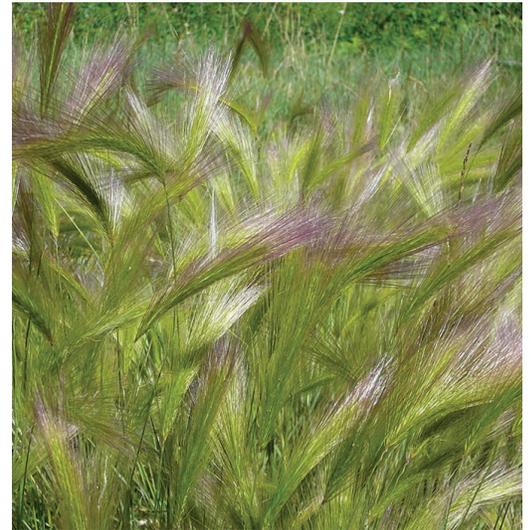
### Impact

It is particularly aggressive on disturbed sites in the dry alkaline soil of southern Yukon where it is problematic to agricultural producers. Hay contaminated with Foxtail Barley is greatly reduced in value and utility.

### Control

Perennial plants require depletion of nutrient reserves in the root system, prevention of seed production and prevention of dispersal. Although the shallow root system makes it easily controllable with tillage, areas such as pastures, hayfields, roadsides and reduced-tillage cropland are more susceptible to infestations. Mowing or intense grazing timed early in the growing season may reduce the plants ability to produce seeds and may provide some control. For small areas pulling up the plants before they set seeds works well. As Foxtail Barley is a plant that invades recent disturbances, the most effective control is to reduce disturbance, to use suppressor forage and to allow large areas to revegetate. Burning will destroy the seeds and weaken the plants, allowing other grasses to compete.

Chemical control: Kerb SC works well and shows little effect on other grasses and legumes.



Photos: Andrea Altherr