



Japanese Brome

Bromus japonicus (Aka Japanese chess, Japanese brome grass)



Max Licher ASU Vascular Plant Herbarium



NDSU Extension Service

Overview:

Japanese brome is a cool season annual grass that is native to Pakistan, central Europe, and east to Japan.¹ It reproduces by seed only and can germinate over a wide range of temperatures, but it does require moisture to germinate - a litter layer aids this.³ Late season seeds require a period of after-ripening and therefore most seedlings are from the previous year's crop.³ Fall seedlings overwinter in a 'rosette' type stage and resume growth in the early spring. Spring germinated seedlings can be killed by a late frost in northern latitudes.³ It fruits and dies in the summer. All parts of the plant remain green while alive and then turn tan upon curing.

Japanese brome competes with native perennials for resources and its presence on reclamation sites can slow succession toward desirable perennials.³

Habitat:

Grows in sandy and clay textured soils but

is intolerant of alkaline soils. It prefers a mesic moisture regime. Sites with a good litter cover promote growth as it holds moisture.³

Identification:

Stems: Can be erect or spreading and grow up to 90 cm tall.¹ Stems are bent at base and the nodes are swollen and brownish.²

Leaves: Blades are up to 20cm long, .25 to .5 cm wide, usually densely hairy with a prominent midrib, and lax & spreading! The sheaths are densely velvety pubescent,² Ligules are about 1.5 mm long, membranous and hairy with ragged edges.⁴

Flowers: Inflorescences have long branches and pedicels, are usually drooping to one side when mature, and each branch bears 1-5 spikelets at the tip.² Spikelets are oval to lance-oval shaped, and are 12 to 30 mm long excluding awns. Awns are 8-10 mm long and straight to bent/twisted at maturity.²

Prevention:

Most seeds fall near the parent plant, but can be spread as a contaminant of grain, hay,

straw and soil, or seed caching by rodents. Japanese brome invades disturbed and undisturbed sites.

Control:

Grazing: Japanese brome can be grazed fall and early spring, but rapidly loses palatability. Production is good in wet years & bad in dry.³ Invasive plants should never be considered as forage.

Cultivation: A healthy perennial plant community should be fairly resistant to Japanese brome invasion. Maintain a desirable plant community and remediate disturbance areas prone to brome invasion.

Mechanical: Disking followed by a second disking or herbicide treatment after the germination period reduced Japanese brome on the Texas Southern Great Plains.³ Fire tends to reduce Japanese brome populations but the reduction usually lasts for only 1 or 2 years. Some seed is killed by fire, but seed bank reserves, reproductive capacity, and competitive ability of Japanese brome are usually sufficient to allow for repopulation of

continued next page

