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Ripgut Brome

(Bromus rigidus)

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Where does it grow? Ripgut brome is common along roadsides and in waste places west of the Cascade Mountains, in Oregon. It is found in dense stands in the southern California lowlands and is found occasionally north to British Columbia and east to Idaho, Utah, and Arizona. It is rare in the eastern and southern states.

Is it important? Ripgut brome is important because it invades depleted ranges and is of low value to livestock. Its long awns get sharp and stiff as the plant matures. The seeds and awns puncture tissue around the eyes and mouth of livestock causing sores and infections. This grass is usable as forage only in the spring during its early growth period.

What does it look like? Ripgut brome is an annual brome grass which was introduced from Europe. It usually starts growth in the fall and goes to seed from April to June. The seed heads turn a deep reddish purple when

maturing and then lose their color when ripe and dead. The seeds have long awns and stick into clothing and the coats of animals. The head is open and nodding with 7 to 15 branches. The spikelets are usually 5 to 7 flowered.

Description:

Length of Life--Annual.

Height--Usually 15 to 24 inches tall.

Bunch or sod--Tillers weakly, is single-stemmed or small bunchgrass.
It is seldom found in pure stands.

Growth period--Comes up in the fall and matures in June or July.

How does it spread?--Ripgut brome spreads entirely by seed. The seeds stick in the coats of animals and may be carried to new areas.

Leaf shape--The leaves are 1/8 to 1/4 inch wide and relatively short.

Location of leaves--Few leaves at the base with some leaves scattered up the stem.

How to use it--Graze it heavily in the spring. Livestock will not graze it after it has matured. After ripgut brome has matured, livestock should be removed from areas in which it is the dominant grass.

Seeds--Long and narrow, 1 1/8 to 1 1/2 inches excluding the awn.
The awn is stout and somewhat longer than the seed, 1 3/8 to 2 inches, and remains attached to the seed.

Other names--Ripgut grass, Ripgut, needle brome and Devil grass.

Does it look like anything else? Yes, it is similar to Bromus sterilis.

The difference is that the leaf sheaths of Bromus sterilis have short hairs and the awns are only about one-half as long.