

## IDENTIFICATION

Photos courtesy of Tom Kaye



Leaf margins of false-brome are hairy (left) and the flowers are borne on drooping spikes (center and right).

False-brome can be distinguished from other grasses by:

- Hairy leaf margins
- Broad, droopy leaves
- Droopy flower spikes
- Spikelets with no or very short stalks
- Clumpy growth form
- Bright apple-green color, which remains green through fall and at least part of winter

## IMPACT

The species has an exceptionally broad range, occupying both forest floors and open environments such as pastures and prairies at a variety of aspects and elevations. Populations are known from riparian forests as well as upland hardwood and conifer forests under patchy and closed canopies at elevations of 200-3500 feet.

Vigorous populations also occupy forest edges and upland prairies in full sun. While most invasive plants in our region tend to favor either open conditions, **or** shade, **or** edges, false-brome can successfully dominate in all of these conditions.

Dense growth of false-brome may alter fire regimes by building up a heavy thatch layer, which can increase the risk and rate of spread of

wildfire due to the fine fuels load. The species itself is fire tolerant, resprouting within two weeks of a burn.

When invading an area, it often disperses first along roadsides and then moves out into undisturbed areas or forest clearcuts and pastures. False-brome becomes a serious pest after forest harvest and inhibits tree seedling establishment by out-competing for moisture. It invades pastures, reducing grazing for livestock. The palatability of this grass for both wildlife and livestock is very low – even the deer don't eat it!

Photo courtesy of Tom Kaye



False-brome dominating a forest understory

When the species dominates the vegetation, it may have negative effects on small and large mammals, native insects, lizards and snakes, and even song-birds by reducing habitat quality and food sources. It may displace threatened and endangered plant species. Fish habitat may be impaired in the long-term through reduction of establishment of riparian trees that provide shade and structure to streams.

Additional information on false-brome and other invasive species is available on the internet at these websites:

- <http://egov.oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS/>
- <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/alert/alrtbrac.html>
- [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/story.php?S\\_No=973&story\\_Type=garde](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/story.php?S_No=973&story_Type=garde)
- <http://www.appliedeco.org/reports.html>

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### PREVENTION OF SPREAD

- Do not plant this species for landscaping
- Remove false-brome from your property
- Educate friends and neighbors
- Limit transport of seed by washing footwear and vehicle undercarriages if the species is detected
- Thoroughly clean trucks and machinery used in forest management activities, as well as the boots, clothing and equipment of forest workers
- Thoroughly clean vehicles, boots, clothing and equipment of recreationists
- Clean dogs, horses, and clothing after visiting areas where there is false-brome

### METHODS OF CONTROL

- For small populations of small area and few plants, hand-pulling, hoes, and other hand tools work well for control (remove pulled vegetation)
- Glyphosate-based herbicides are an effective control for large, more established populations
- Mowing can be used effectively with other methods when performed before seed-set (remove mowed vegetation)

Photo courtesy of Tom Kaye



False-brome dominating in the open

## FREE HELP WITH FALSE-BROME CONTROL!

Photo courtesy of Chris Phan



### GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR LOCAL WATERSHED COUNCIL

The Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council is initiating a project to control false-brome in our watershed. The first portion of the project will be to formally survey for false-brome on participating private properties around the lower watershed in order to accurately map the extent of the infestation in those areas, and to give educational workshops on identification and the available methods of control. While the false-brome inventory will be ongoing throughout the 2008 field season, we hope to identify priority sites and begin to treat a subset of populations this summer. We hope to work with many of you on this exciting project, and look forward to meeting you!

**For more information about how we can help you control false-brome, contact the MFWWC Outreach & Stewardship Coordinator:**

Jenny Getty: (541) 510-4373  
email: [outreach@mfwwc.org](mailto:outreach@mfwwc.org)

Prepared Jan. 2008 by: Jenny Getty, Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council, PO Box 27, Lowell, OR 97452 Thanks to Tom Kaye of the Institute for Applied Ecology, Eve Montanaro of the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council, and the MFWW Invasive Species Working Group.

## MIDDLE FORK WILLAMETTE WATERSHED COUNCIL

Watershed Councils are locally organized, voluntary, non-regulatory groups established to improve the condition of watersheds in their local area. Watershed Councils create a forum that brings local, state, and federal land management agencies together with local property owners, concerned citizens, and private land managers to form a common vision for the ecological and economic sustainability and livability of their watershed.

*The Watershed Council forum provides local people a voice in natural resource management, which can significantly influence watershed management decisions.*

Local citizens interested in establishing a Watershed Council within the Middle Fork Willamette River watershed began meeting in early 1998. The movement gradually grew and led to support funding being secured from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) in January of 2000. A Council operating Charter was developed during the summer and fall of 2000, and the Lane County Board of Commissioners formally recognized the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council on November 21, 2000.

For more information on Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council meetings and activities, or to simply learn more about the Watershed Council, please contact the Council at PO Box 27, Lowell, OR 97452, or via phone (541) 937-9800 or e-mail at [director@mfwwc.org](mailto:director@mfwwc.org)

Middle Fork Willamette



WATERSHED  
COUNCIL



## INVASIVE GRASS ALERT

False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*)

Photo courtesy of Tom Kaye, Institute for Applied Ecology



False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*)

## Watch Out For This Grass!

False-brome is an invasive grass species that is rapidly expanding in the Middle Fork Willamette watershed. This exotic perennial, native to Eurasia and North Africa, is an escaped ornamental that is now becoming established in western Oregon at an alarming rate. It typically grows about 1.5-2 feet tall, and it is capable of completely dominating under-story and open habitats to the exclusion of most other herbaceous species (both native and non-native). False-brome does not appear to spread by its root system, but forms large clumps that tend to grow together, and reproduces rapidly from seed. Though short-lived in the seed bank (~3 yrs.), the seeds disperse on passing vehicles, people, pets and wildlife and can thus easily invade new sites.

