



A Northern Nevada Homeowner's Guide to Identifying and Managing Hare Barley

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Other common names: Wild barley, foxtail, farmer's foxtail, mouse barley.

Scientific name: *Hordeum murinum*

Family: Poaceae

Description:

Leaves: Flat and narrow (0.1 to 0.3 inches wide), smooth or hairy with well-developed auricles (protrusions) that clasp the stem. Leaves may be up to 8 inches long.

Stems: Produces round stems that grow in an upright or broad form, spreading from the base of the plant.

Flowers: Grows a bristly, thick spike 1 to 3 inches long, with 1/4- to 1-inch-long awns (bristles), in spring. The spike looks like a fox's tail. Blooms from spring to early summer

Seeds: Once spikes have dried out, forms barbed seeds often referred to as "foxtails." Seeds stick to the fur of animals, human clothing, etc.

Roots: Fibrous.

Native to: Eurasia; naturalized to the western United States

Where it grows: Cultivated land, roadsides, landscaped areas, turf, vacant lots, in pavement cracks and other disturbed or unmanaged sites. Often grows in wet and salty areas.

Life cycle: Cool-season annual (grows in cooler spring weather)

Reproduction: Reproduces by seed



Typical plant growing in disturbed site.

Control methods: Control hare barley prior to seed formation. As this occurs in early spring, careful monitoring is needed to stop the spread of this weed.

Mechanical: Dig, hoe or pull young seedlings. Use mechanical control methods prior to formation of spikes. Mowing encourages plants to grow close to the ground and does not control them.

Cultural: Thick mulches can help prevent seed germination. Plant desirable vegetation that will shade the area and reduce germination and growth of young plants.

Biological: None. Grazing can result in an increase in the amount of foxtail barley in a pasture, and the seeds can injure animals.

Chemical: Apply grass-selective herbicides on young plants. Pre-emergence herbicides can be used to manage existing seed banks.

References:

- Calflora Taxon Report 4227, http://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/species_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=4227.
- DiTomaso, J.M. and E.A. Healy. 2007. Weeds of California and Other Western States. University of California Publication 3488.
- Halvorson, W.L. and Guertin, P. 2003. Fact Sheet for *Hordeum L.* species. USGS Weeds in the West Project, http://sdrsnet.snr.arizona.edu/data/sdrs/ww/docs/hord_spp.pdf.
- UC IPM. No date. Hare Barley, http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/hare_barley.html.
- Whitson, Tom D. (editor). 2002. Weeds of the West. University of Wyoming, Jackson, Wyoming.



The leaves are long, narrow and may be hairy.



A flowering spike.



As the flowering spikes dry, they break apart into barbed seeds.

(All photos by S. Donaldson)