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## CHEATGRASS MANAGEMENT TIPS

Cheatgrass, a member of the Grass family, is a winter annual that germinates in the fall and overwinters as a seedling. The roots are finely divided and fibrous. The flowers are light green and occur in a nodding, open inflorescence. As the plant matures, the flowers change from green to purple-brown. Leaves are light green and hairy. Reproduction is only by seed. **Seed longevity is two to five years.** Plants usually grow six inches to two feet tall. Cheatgrass can survive continuous years of drought and may grow vigorously following drought. Cheatgrass increases the continuity of fine-textured fuel, which promotes larger and more frequent fires. Soil water depletion is one of the primary mechanisms by which cheatgrass competes with perennial vegetation. Cheatgrass can form dense stands, reducing desired forage species.



**Management and control efforts must be planned for several years on the existing site in order to prevent seed formation/dispersal and to monitor for, and treat appropriately, any new plants that emerge from seed. If seed formation can be prevented for a few years, there will be a significant decline in the abundance of cheatgrass.**

## Effective control measures for the management of cheatgrass include:

- 1. Mechanical (hand pulling & mowing):** Diligent hand pulling or grubbing can provide control of very small infestations of cheatgrass, but is not feasible for more established infestations. Wear gloves when hand pulling. Mowing before seed production can decrease seed production. Mowing after seed production will scatter seeds further and make the problem worse.
- 2. Herbicide: Always follow directions on the label. The label is the law!** Calibrate your equipment to ensure that you are adding the proper amount of herbicide to your tank. The following herbicides are commonly used to control cheatgrass. **Do NOT use these herbicides in lawns, turf or ornamental settings – read the label.** *Timing of herbicide application is very important – see specific herbicides below for timing recommendations.*

### Mixing rates in small backpack or hand sprayers are as follows:

Esplanade 200 SC:	2/3 - 1 teaspoon herbicide to 1 gallon of water (apply in late summer/early fall; pre-emergent). Not for use on grazed areas.
Rejuvra:	2/3 – 1 teaspoon herbicide to 1 gallon of water (apply in late summer/early fall; pre-emergent). Can be used on grazed areas.
Plateau:	3/4 – 2.25 teaspoons herbicide to 1 gallon of water (apply in fall).
Glyphosate:	2.25 – 3 teaspoons herbicide to 1 gallon of water (apply when desirable grasses are dormant, typically in early spring/late fall). Glyphosate will kill grasses as well as forbs.

### Rates in large sprayers are as follows:

Esplanade 200 SC:	3.5 - 5 oz herbicide per acre (apply in late summer/early fall; pre-emergent). Not for use on grazed areas.
Rejuvra:	3.5 - 5 oz herbicide per acre (apply in late summer/early fall; pre-emergent). Can be use on grazed areas.
Plateau:	4 - 12 oz herbicide per acre (apply in the fall).
Glyphosate:	12 - 16 oz herbicide per acre (apply when desirable grasses are dormant, typically in early spring/late fall). Glyphosate will kill grasses as well as forbs.

**NOTE:** Adding a surfactant to your tank mix may enhance the performance of your herbicide and is required for certain herbicides (read the label). Add 0.5 - 1 oz per gallon of water for backpack sprayers or 1 – 2 pints per 100 gallons for large sprayers.

- 3. Grazing:** Prescribed livestock grazing in the spring, prior to seed formation, can reduce seed production in localized areas.
- 4. Cultural (competition & revegetation):** Revegetation of infested stands in combination with prescribed grazing, mowing and herbicide control is imperative.
- 5. Integrated management:** Management of cheatgrass is more effective when more than one strategy is used.

**Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply discrimination or endorsement by the Gallatin County Weed District.**