

## BRACHYPODIUM SYLVATICUM:

### PROPOSAL TO DESIGNATE AS A WASHINGTON STATE CLASS A NOXIOUS WEED

**Scientific Name:** *Brachypodium sylvaticum*

**Common Name:** False brome

**Description:** Some of *B. sylvaticum*'s distinguishing features are its broad (4-10 mm) leaves, pubescence on at least the lower part of the culms (stems) and leaf margins, and a long-lasting bright lime-green color. It differs from native perennial *Bromus* species in having sheaths open to the base, having no red coloration on the lower stem (common on Columbia brome) and spikelets directly attached to the flower stem (no 0.5 inch pedicels as on Columbia brome). In contrast, our perennial bromes have sheaths closed >1/4 of their length and their spikelets are generally strongly pedunculate.

**Growth characteristics:** *B. sylvaticum* plants appear to be self-fertile producing few to a couple hundred seeds per plant. Isolated plants are observed to produce viable seeds and become new weed epicenters complicating control efforts. Seed movement by wildlife is locally important with both birds and small mammals transporting seeds. Deer and elk also are important vectors of localized spread. Long-distance dispersal is predominantly through logging activities, roadside maintenance equipment and recreational activities within infested areas. *B. sylvaticum* does not appear to be rhizomatous, but forms large clumps that tend to coalesce, and it reproduces rapidly from seed.

**Habitat:** *B. sylvaticum* in Oregon has an exceptionally broad ecological amplitude, occupying forest floor and open environments at a variety of aspects, elevations and rainfall zones. Populations are known from riparian forests as well as upland hardwood and conifer forests under closed canopy. Vigorous populations also occupy forest edges and upland prairies in full sun. When invading an area, it may first disperse along roadsides, then move out into undisturbed areas or clearcuts.

**Geographic Distribution:** This exotic perennial is native to Europe, Asia and North Africa

**US Distribution:** Oregon is the epicenter for *B. sylvaticum* in the U.S. with smaller outbreaks in California and Washington. Limited evidence suggests that *B. sylvaticum* can survive in the drier colder portions of Oregon. The earliest record of the species in North America is a 1939 collection from near Eugene in Lane County, Oregon. By 1966, the species grew in at least two large colonies in the Corvallis-Albany area of Benton County, Oregon, where it was apparently thoroughly naturalized. Its most favorable habitat in Oregon can be found in and around the Willamette Valley and as far south as Josephine County (a few miles from the California border).

**Washington Distribution:** This species appears to have recently moved into Washington. In 2007, it was observed for the first time in Washington at Beacon Rock Park in Skamania County.

**Rational for listing:** *B. sylvaticum* is already listed as a noxious weed in Oregon, where it is capable of completely dominating susceptible forest understory and open habitats to the exclusion of most other native species. Since only one site of this species has been found in Washington, listing this species in will hopefully encourage control of this species before it is widely established