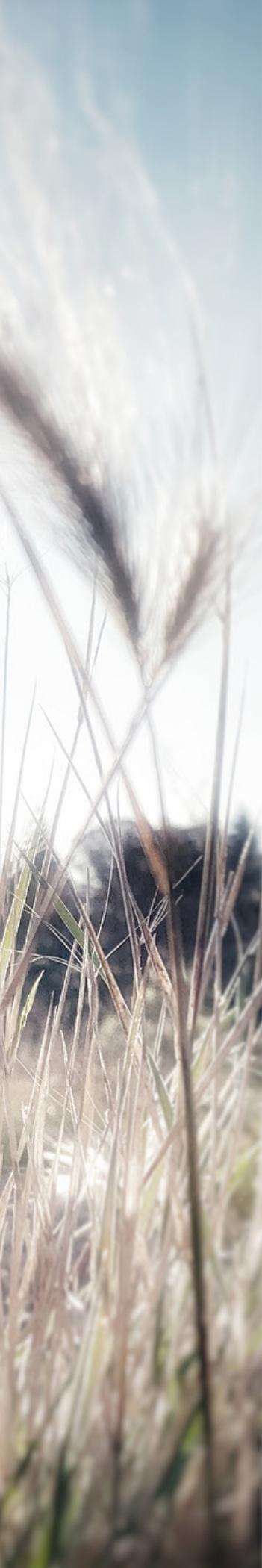


MANAGING FOXTAIL IN OUR COMMUNITY

**A GUIDE TO CONTROLLING AND
PREVENTING FOXTAIL BARLEY**





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FOXTAIL BARLEY, WHAT IS IT?

In recent years, Foxtail Barley (foxtail) has experienced increase growth within the City of Warman.

Under the Weed Control Act, 2010, Foxtail Barley (*Hordeum jubatum* L.) has been designated as a troublesome weed and a nuisance. It is a short lived perennial grass, native to the area, with a shallow, fibrous root system. The plant grows in clumps, has narrow leaves and the seeds have brushlike fine and long hairs which make the seed appear to have a 'tail'. These seed heads have a reddish green colour to them during the growth stage and are a cream colour when mature. The seed heads are fuzzy and are easily dispersed by the wind. They often cling to the coats of pets and other animals.



Foxtail can be found in many parks, open spaces and on underand /or partially developed land. The plant is very adaptable and can be found in a wide range of environments. It is one of the few weeds that are native to the region and can be found growing in all types of soil. It can go by other names including: wild barley, skunk-tail grass and tickle grass.

The City of Warman receives several complaints in regard to the invasive plant and it is taking a proactive approach to minimize the proliferation of foxtail. The City of Warman is working on educating developers and landowners to create awareness and sharing techniques to control the foxtail issues in Warman.



FOXTAIL, WHY IT CAUSES CONCERNS?

Foxtail reaches maturity in the summer months, typically in July. The mature seed heads are sharp and break up very easily and spread quickly.

Foxtail is especially harmful to domestic animals and particularly dogs. The barbed seed heads can become lodged in the skin, nose, mouth and eyes of animals. Ingestion of the seeds, by domestic animals, can be severe, as they can easily be embedded in the internal tissues causing infection and possible death.

Foxtail can be problematic to new homeowners wishing to establish landscaping, as they can produce thousands of seeds per plant and are easily spread.

Foxtail, also bothersome to people as the seeds can cling to clothing, fabric, shoes and socks, working their way through the fabric causing irritation to the skin while trying to enjoy the outdoors.



CONTROLLING FOXTAIL.

Controlling foxtail does require a multi-year strategy. Seeds tend to germinate in cool moist soil so the months of April, May and September, October are months that this may occur in. Germinated seeds are viable for two to three years. The Foxtail plant can produce thousands of seeds each.

There are several techniques we can use to control Foxtail and they include: mowing, cover crops, tillage and herbicide application.

MOWING: It is recommended that mowing take place in late May to early June, which is prior to seed development and prevents seed set. Mowing a second time later in the sea-

son may be required for maintenance and prevention. Mowing Bagging and disposal of seed heads is required once seeds develop. Mowing should be done within 10 days of seed head emergence, to prevent the formation of viable seeds.

COVER CROPS: Cover crops are great for larger areas that you need to control. Plant cover crops that can compete with foxtail such as alfalfa, clover, oats and rye. These crops should be planted early in the growing season, any later and the crop will not be able to grow quick enough to provide any benefit. Planting cover crops helps reduce the density of the weed population as well as the size of the weed. It may take time to get the desired weed control from cover crops.

TILLAGE: Foxtail has very shallow and fibrous root system which make tillage ideal for controlling the weed. Undercutting the weed can be very effective making turning over the soil not necessary. It is best to till in the Fall rather than the spring.

HERBICIDE: Foxtail can be controlled by using herbicides which can be very effective. There are some selective herbicides that can be applied in late October when the soil temperature is low but above freezing. Majority of other herbicide treatments can be applied when the plants are in the growing phase during the summer months, but even though the plant may die, the seeds will still pose a risk to pets and other animals. No matter the herbicide used, always follow the label for proper usage and safety precautions and ensure it is registered for use in Canada. Mowing and line trimming, bagging and disposal is recommended, in addition to late herbicide treatments.



MONITORING OF WEEDS IN THE CITY

The City of Warman has a bylaw, Bylaw No. 2006-01 A Bylaw to Province for the Abatement of Nuisances, which addresses weed control in sections 8 through 10:

“Overgrown Grass and Weeds

8. Notwithstanding the generality of Section 5, no owner or occupant of land shall cause or permit the land to be overgrown with grass or weeds.

9. For the purposes of this section, “overgrown” means in excess of 0.20 meters in height.

10. This section shall not apply to any growth which forms part of a natural garden that has been deliberately planted to produce ground cover, including one or more species of wildflowers, shrubs, perennials, grasses or combinations of them, whether native or non-native, consistent with a managed and natural landscape other than regularly mown grass.”

The Province of Saskatchewan also has the Weed Control Act, 2010, An Act respecting Prohibited, Noxious and Nuisance Weeds which can further aid in the management of the nuisance of the Foxtail weed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on prohibited, noxious and nuisance weeds, visit:

- Saskatchewan’s Weed Control Act, 2010 – includes the duties of the weed inspector, owners and occupants, fines and penalties, as well as a listing of plants designated as prohibited, noxious and nuisance weeds in Saskatchewan.
- Saskatchewan’s Urban Guide to Weed Control – includes weed identification and management tips.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES FOR YOUR PETS

Unfortunately Foxtail is present in our Community. Some preventive measures for your pets include:

- Brushing your pet after being outdoors
- Keeping your pet on a leash
- Checking their ears and paws daily
- Using a netted muzzle or field guard





CAUTION FOXTAILS

Sources: Strautman, Bill. "Consider spot tillage against foxtail barley." *The Western Producer*.
"Weed Suppression." *Cover Crops Canada*.
City of Saskatoon - Weed Control

