

Management Guide for *Alopecurus pratensis* (meadow foxtail)

Species Name	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> (ALOPR3) ^{1, 2}	Common Name	meadow foxtail
Family: Poaceae	Synonyms:	Common name- ^{2, 4} golden foxtail grass, perennial foxtail, yellow foxtail grass, common foxtail	
Form: grass		Former species name- <i>Alopecurus alpinus</i> Smith var. <i>songaricus</i>	
Habitat: ^{3, 5} Moist soils in meadows/grasslands, emergent wetlands, riverbanks, lakesides, ditches, roadsides and disturbed or abandoned areas. Well suited to cool, temperate climates.			
Occurrence: ^{1, 5, 6} Introduced to much of North and parts of South America, northern Europe, and Australia		Native range: ^{3, 5, 6} Europe, Asia Minor, Central Asia, Siberia to Mongolia, northern China and Russia	
Flowering time- May to June ^{3, 6}		Weed class: OR- N/A, WA- N/A, BC- N/A	
Weed ID: ^{3, 5, 6} Perennial tufted grass, erect columns 30-120cm long, leaf blades 6-40cm long & 3-10mm wide with smooth or slightly rough surface, rough on lower surface. No nodal roots. Membranous ligule 1-2.5mm long. Inflorescence a spike-like panicle 2-13cm long & 0.5-1cm wide, tight packed silver-green to purplish spikelets solitary with 1 fertile floret, no rachilla extension, elliptical or oblong, laterally compressed 4-6mm long. Glumes have united margins 1/4 th of length. Lemma elliptic or ovate, 4-6mm long, 4-veined, with single awn 6-10mm long projecting beyond glumes. Palea absent or minute. Fruit- caryopsis with adherent pericarp, spikelets shed indep. Roots are fibrous and rhizomatous. ⁷			
Look-a-likes: see photos below <i>Phleum pratense</i> (Timothy grass) ³ - non-native, <i>Setaria spp.</i> , <i>A. geniculatus</i> (water foxtail)- native & other <i>Alopecurus spp.</i>			
Weed distinction <i>Phleum pratense</i> - blooms a few weeks later than <i>A. pratensis</i> , and has rougher inflorescence texture, and is more firm. ³ <i>Setaria</i> & other <i>Alopecurus spp.</i> - have squiggly-feeling cylindrical inflorescences when rolled between your fingers and are nodding to some degree. And meadow foxtail has a single awn from the lemma rather than multiple awn-like hairs from the bottom of each spikelet of <i>Setaria</i> and some other <i>Alopecurus</i> (though some are also single) ³ <i>A. geniculatus</i> - has a creeping lower flower stem & shorter spikelets <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> glume & lemma with single awn ³			
Ecological Impacts: Meadow foxtail produces large number seed and vegetative spread by rhizomes, may not have enduring seed bank. ⁵ Considered a threat to <i>Sidalcea nelsoniana</i> in OR and WA, USA. Moist prairies with sensitive species are most impacted.			

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Control Methods

Large Scale:

Chemical

- **Glyphosate** is very effective for non-sensitive habitats.^{5, 9}

Timing

- Late summer to early fall, before tillering occurs.⁹
- Some effect from **dicamba** application at 1.5 kg/ha.⁹
- Grass-selective control around broadleaf plants- **haloxyfop**, **sethoxydim** or **fluzifop** may be effective⁵

Grazing/Mowing - Early spring grazing may decrease the percentage of *A. pratensis* within mixed species pasture but it may become less palatable as it matures but its use as a pasture grass makes it unlikely that grazing alone will be effective control.^{5, 9} Early and frequent mowing can reduce biomass and prevent further seeding (can still spread through rhizomes).¹⁰

May respond to fire, but does not appear to be significantly controlled with prescribed burns.⁸

Small Scale:

- Hand-pulling/ digging is possible for small colonies because rhizomes are not extensive.^{5, 9}

Unsuccessful control methods:

- **Flooding** is tolerated by meadow foxtail⁵
- Herbicides **chlorsulfuron** or **metsulfuron-methyl** have no effect on biomass up to 0.14kg/ha.⁷
- Herbicide **2,4-D amine** (at 3 kg/ha) and **2,4-D butyl ester** (at 2 kg/ha) had little effect.⁹

Last Updated By: Lauren Clark

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References:

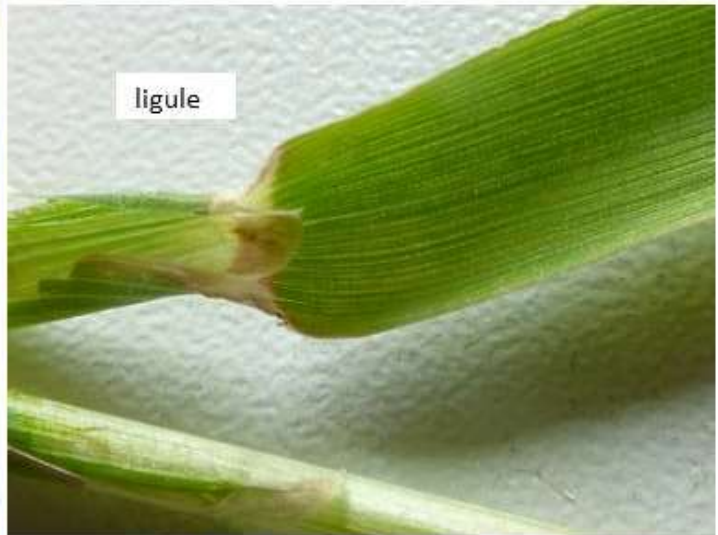
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Photos:



flowering stages



habit



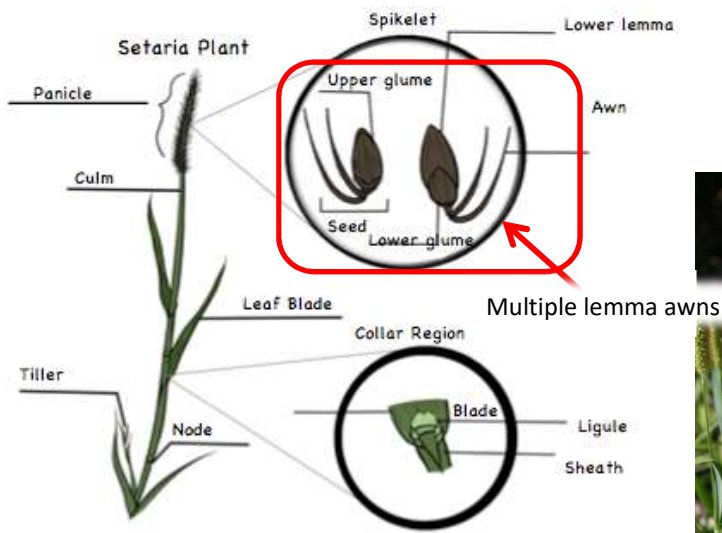
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Look-a-like Photos:

Phleum pratense



Setaria spp.



Drawn by Morgan Koller, Kirkland High School

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Other *Alopecurus* spp.

Alopecurus carolinianus
spikelets
(also with a single awn)



Alopecurus pratensis
spikelets



Alopecurus arundinaceus
spikelets