

# Distinguishing Western Wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) and Couchgrass (*Elymus repens* subsp. *repens*) Florets



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## Importance of Distinguishing Western Wheatgrass and Couchgrass

•Western Wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii* (Rydb.) Barkworth & D.R.Dewey) is a crop kind native to North America. Couchgrass (*Elymus repens* (L.) Gould subsp. *repens*), is a native of Eurasia and a regulated weed classified as Primary Noxious in the Canadian *Seeds Act and Regulations*.

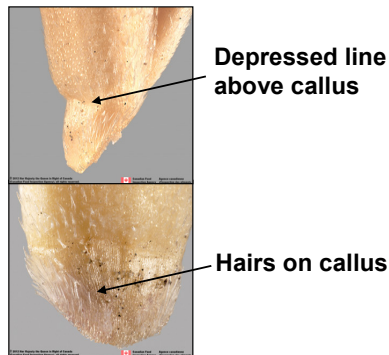
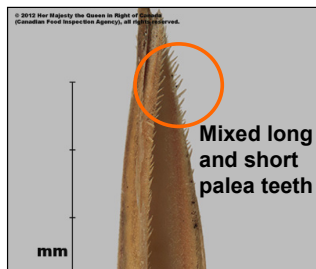
•They are both perennials and are adapted to similar growing areas and conditions in North America. These two species are similar and the florets can be difficult to distinguish. It is important to correctly identify these species to ensure the correct labelling of seed and to minimize the spread of Couchgrass.

## Distinguishing Features

•Distinctive features of Western Wheatgrass and Couchgrass seeds include\* :

Feature	Rachilla Shape	Sinus Shape	Suture Shape	Palea Teeth	Callus Features
<b>Western Wheatgrass</b>	• wedge-shaped	• V-shaped	• triangle-shaped	• mixed long and short	• depressed line above callus with hairs
<b>Couchgrass</b>	• parallel-sided	• U-shaped	• oval-shaped	• short, thick and widely-spaced	• shiny bump above callus with no hairs

\* Florets may not present all of the features described due to: immaturity, mechanical, chemical or insect damage or disease

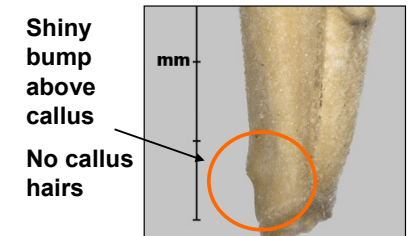
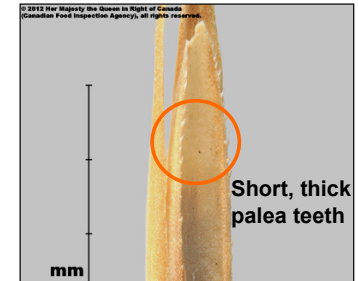


*P. smithii*



Western Wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*)

Couchgrass (*Elymus repens* subsp. *repens*)



*E. repens* subsp. *repens*

\* Images prepared by Jo Jones; specimens from the NSH in Saskatoon, SK