



# **FOXTAIL BARLEY**

*Hordeum jubatum*

# WHAT IS FOXTAIL?

Foxtail barley is a perennial grass native to the prairies of North America that can be found throughout Lethbridge.

Foxtail is distinctly identified by its tufted head resembling the tail of a fox.

Growing in all soil types and moisture levels, foxtail is specially adapted to dry, alkaline soil and can be found in Lethbridge around storm ponds and wetlands, dry lowlands, and disturbed sites.

It is a pioneer species in bare areas surrounding receded water and soils with high salinity.



# ISSUES

Foxtail barley matures in early summer. Once mature, the fluffy green seeds turn brownish red, and become dry, barbed and sharp. The barbs catch wind, fur and clothing to disperse.



The barbed seeds can become lodged in the eyes, ears, noses and paws of animals including pets and wildlife causing damage and severe pain.

Seeds can be irritating to humans as they can work their way through clothing and scratch or pierce skin.

There is also a higher risk of fire in areas with dense populations of foxtail.

## MANAGING FOXTAIL

### **CHEMICAL TREATMENTS**

Glyphosate treatments have been completed in the past. Glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide which kills all vegetation in the treatment area. Areas are seeded with grass seed after treatment.

### **MECHANICAL METHODS**

Mowing can be an effective control method if completed before the seeds are mature (still green and soft). Once this window has passed, mowing only further disperses foxtail seeds.

Hand pulling is labour intensive, but effective if the patch of foxtail is small. Foxtail have dense, fibrous roots, and care must be taken to remove as much root as possible.

### **SOIL AMENDMENTS**

Increasing nitrogen levels in the soil may help preferred grasses outcompete foxtail barley. Adding nitrogen rich compost or fertilizer to infested areas might help.



# SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES

## PET SAFETY

Foxtail usually matures in mid-summer forming barbed seed heads. These can become extremely dangerous to dogs and other animals as they can get lodged in the skin, mouth, nose and eyes. If a dog digests these barbed seed heads, they can cause serious illness or even death.

You can protect your pet by:

- Avoid areas where Foxtail and other weeds are growing
- If you must go in these areas, keep your dog on a leash at all times
- Trim the hair between your dog's toes, around ears and their belly
- Check their coat for Foxtail and brush your dog after being outdoors
- Use a netted muzzle



## WEED CONTROL IN THE CITY OF LETHBRIDGE

Through the Alberta's Weed Control Act, Alberta Weed Regulation and the City's Weed Control Bylaw, certain plants have been identified as noxious weeds.

*In Alberta, Foxtail is not designated by legislation as a noxious weed.*

## HOW DO I SUBMIT A CONCERN?

If you would like to report a weed complaint, contact Lethbridge 311.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT OR CALL:

[www.lethbridge.ca/foxtail](http://www.lethbridge.ca/foxtail)

lethbridge311

*The city is managing infestations as needed and working on proactive measures to mitigate future foxtail populations*

