

Downy Brome (*Bromus tectorum*)

Description

An annual grass that can grow to 70 cm in height. Leaves are rolled in the shoot and are densely soft hairy on both surfaces. The leaves can be from 2-4 mm wide and up to 20 cm long. Its ligules are from 1 to 2.5 mm long and may be toothed or fringed with hairs near the top. Leaves lack auricles. The panicles measure 5-20 cm long, having numerous branches, but retain an open quality and are generally nodding. The panicles bear from 3 to 8 drooping spikelets, with each spikelet from 2 to 3.5 cm long. The glumes are awl-shaped and the lemmas are toothed, narrowly lanceolate and hairy. The lemmas are 1-1.5 mm wide, acuminate and lead to slender, straight awns that are 10-17 mm long.

Key Identifiers

- ✓ densely hairy leaves and sheaths, no auricles
- ✓ soft drooping panicle that is often purple-tinged at maturity
- ✓ long, thin awned spikelets

Location in Canada

Downy Brome occurs in all Canadian Provinces from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to British Columbia, there are no records from Newfoundland.

Resources

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex3472?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex3472?opendocument)

<http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca/Downloads/FS-DownyBrome.pdf>

BIOLOGY OF CANADIAN WEEDS. 75. *Bromus tectorum* L.

<http://mining.state.co.us/pdfFiles/DownybromeandJapanesebromeliteraturereviewColoradoDRMSDec09.pdf>

Similar species

Downy brome is easily distinguished from other grasses in the seedling stage by its very hairy leaves. Downy brome can be confused with fall rye in the seedling stage as both plants are purplish in color, but fall rye has auricles that encircle the stem at the base of the leaf blade. Downy brome does not have auricles.

Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicus*) It is very difficult to distinguish the two bromes in the seedling stage, but Japanese brome tends to grow in wetter sites than downy brome. Downy brome has an open drooping panicle with long straight awns attached to the seed. Japanese brome has a panicle with the spikelets borne at the ends of long branches. Japanese brome seed is somewhat shorter than downy brome seed and has a twisted awn. Downy brome seed is a reddish color at maturity while Japanese brome is tan in color.

