



# Jointed Goatgrass

## *Aegilops cylindrica* Host

Jointed goatgrass is an invasive plant that reduces the quality and yield of wheat and other crops. It is difficult to control in wheat because it is genetically related to wheat: the two species have similar growth habits and biology and they are also known to cross with each other. Since wheat seeds are the same size and shape as jointed goatgrass spikelets, it is difficult to mechanically separate them.

- Looks similar to wheat
- Lowers yields of wheat and other crops
- Difficult to control
- Spreads with farm equipment, seed and grain
- Prohibited in seed under the *Seeds Act*

Jointed goatgrass plants (Sam Brinker, OMNR-NHIC)

### Where it's found

Jointed goatgrass grows in cultivated fields, pastures and disturbed areas along fences, ditches and roadsides. This invasive plant is native to southeastern Europe and western Asia. It was likely introduced into the United States in contaminated winter wheat seed in the 1880s and has since become one of the most difficult weeds to control in the western states. To date in Canada, it has been confined to two small sites in Ontario.

### What it looks like

To the untrained eye, this invasive plant can look a lot like common grasses that grow in Canada. Jointed goatgrass is an annual grass that is 40-60 cm tall and looks similar to wheat. Unlike wheat, jointed goatgrass has narrower cylindrical spikes and evenly-spaced hairs extending from the leaf blade. The spikes are composed of a series of spikelets that contain one or more seeds.

### How it spreads

Jointed goatgrass seed spreads primarily as a contaminant in wheat seed. It can also spread with farm machinery and when mixed in with grain, seed and straw of other cereals.

### Legislation

Jointed goatgrass is listed as a prohibited noxious weed in the *Weed Seeds Order* under the *Seeds Act*. Its presence in domestic and imported seed for planting is prohibited.

Reporting this invasive plant should be done through your local CFIA office. For a list of offices please call 1-800-442-2342 or visit the the CFIA website at: [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca).

**Invasive plants are plant species that spread when introduced outside of their natural past or present distribution and cause serious and often irreversible damage to Canada's ecosystems, economy and society.**



**A** - Jointed goatgrass spike (Sam Brinker, OMNR-NHIC) **B** - Hairs along leaf margins (Steve Dewey, Utah State University) **C** - Jointed goatgrass spikelets in wheat grains (Phil Westra, Colorado State University) **D** - Jointed goatgrass (Steve Dewey, Utah State University)

### What we can do about it

There are steps you can take to help stop the spread of this weed in Canada:

- Use certified seed.
- Ensure machinery brought onto the farm and to other areas is free of soil and plant parts.
- Look for jointed goatgrass in crops and in disturbed areas.