

Management

————— Reduce seed production by integrating available tools —————

Physical control

Grazing and prescribed burns can be effective tools to manage barb goatgrass. Typically, livestock avoid barb goatgrass but will feed at early stages before seedhead emergence. Intensive grazing and mowing practices may lead to prevention of seed formation. Burning will not effectively control seed on the soil surface so burns should take place before seeds fall. Germination may increase the year after burning due to increased fertility and light penetration. These areas should be retreated for several consecutive years. In rangeland, burning followed up with spring seeding the next year may improve the control of barb goatgrass.*

Mechanical control

With the right timing, mowing can reduce seed production. Mowing should occur in the early flowering stage. Mowing too early or late will only increase the barb goatgrass problem. Hand pulling is also effective, if roots are pulled.

Chemical control

There are very few chemical options for the management of barb goatgrass.

Biological control

There are currently no approved biological controls for the management of barb goatgrass.

*** Follow up treatment using mechanical or chemical controls for seedhead reduction is essential for significant seed decline.**

Researchers at the UC Hopland Research & Extension Center tested the effectiveness of prescribed burns to control barb goatgrass.



Photo: University of California
Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources



Get involved!

Want to play a role in the management of noxious weeds in your parklands? Inquire with your local EBRPD park staff about the possibility of setting up a work day for your organized group or visit <http://www.ebparks.org/getinvolved/volunteer/operations> for more information and to register for volunteer opportunities. See you in the parks!

Cover photo: Pamela Beitz
Back photo: Pamela Beitz

This brochure is provided as a public service of the Stewardship Department of the East Bay Regional Park District.

Barb Goatgrass



East Bay 
Regional Park District

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How did it get here?

Barb goatgrass (*Aegilops triuncialis* L.) is a winter annual, native to Mediterranean Europe and western Asia. It was identified in California in the early 1900s when Mexican cattle were imported into El Dorado and Sacramento Counties. The spread of barb goatgrass is relatively recent.



Photo: Pamela Beitz

Barb goatgrass is green and flowering when other annual grasses are brown.

Identification

- **Foliage:** grey green with fine hairs
- **Color:** reddish purple at maturity, dry to a straw color
- **Size:** may grow up to 20 inches tall.
- **Seedhead:** 1 to 2.5 inches long, zigzagged pattern along spike, long barbed awns
- **Seeds:** drop late in the season
- **Germination:** in fall after first rains, may continue through spring

An opportunistic competitor

Early detection is key to controlling barb goatgrass. Early infestations are localized since the seeds do not fall far from the mother plant. However, seeds can be distributed by animal movement when barbed awns attach to livestock and wildlife. Seeds can also be dispersed to distant feeding areas and roadsides through hay from dryland pastures. Seeds can be viable for 2+ years in the soil. Barb goatgrass is extremely competitive on annual rangelands due to the deep and rapidly establishing root system. Barb goatgrass resprouts after grazing and mowing.



Photo: Pamela Beitz

Barb goatgrass flowers in summer, later in the season than most annual grasses.

What's the big deal?

Barb goatgrass is expanding throughout Northern California and the Central and South Coast. This species has a high silica content, resulting in a persistent thatch that can suppress other species. Barb goatgrass is late-maturing and drought tolerant. This species quickly creates a devastating monoculture that diminishes species diversity, forage quality and quantity, and wildlife habitat of infested areas. It infests dryland fields, roadsides, annual rangelands, and oak woodlands in both disturbed and undisturbed sites.



Photo: Pamela Beitz

Some barb goatgrass will resprout after mowing, requiring a second treatment.