

War on Weeds — Weeds are Everybody's Problem

THE ISSUE: Milium (spring millet)

Milium (*Milium vernale*) is a winter annual grass that is native to southern Europe and western Asia. It was most likely introduced to the U.S. as a contaminate in seed. It is best known for invading winter wheat, but it can also inhabit other cultivated fields, pastures, and rangelands. While its impact on the U.S. is limited, it can be a significant threat in parts of Idaho.



Photo courtesy of USDA APHIS PPQ – Oxford, North Carolina, Bugwood.org

Milium can grow up to 2.5 feet tall. It has flat leaves that are about 1/4 inch wide by 4 inches long. Milium lacks auricles, and it has 1/4-inch-long membranous ligules. When stands of Milium are dense, stems are spindly, without surrounding vegetation they would fall. It has open panicles that can be up to 8 inches long. Spikelets are awnless, 1/8 inch long, and are found on the tip of each panicle branch. Shiny hard seeds can be dispersed by wind, water, and farm equipment. Seed is often spread by equipment during harvest.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Options:

- Prevention — Learn to identify this plant. Be sure to clean equipment before changing fields. Always plant clean seed!
- Mechanical — Spring tillage can effectively control Milium.
- Cultural — Crop rotation is good practice; it may help break the life cycle of this weed and provide the opportunity to use other control methods.
- Chemical — Consult with your local Extension Educator about chemical control options for this weed.

Justin Hatch, University of Idaho Extension Agriculture Educator in Caribou and Bear Lake Counties. 208-547-3205 JLHatch@uidaho.edu