

**Category A—High**

**Common Mediterranean grass (*Schismus barbatus*)**



*Photo credit: Bureau of Indian Affairs*



*Photo credit: J.M. DiTomaso*



*Photo Credit: S. Carnahan*

**Origin**

Native to southern Europe and possibly parts of southwestern Asia and North Africa



*Photo credit: A. Mendoza*

**Description**

Common Mediterranean grass is a cool-season tufted annual grass species. They are low-growing and form individual clumps, reaching close to 8 inches in height, with fine foliage and a dense 2-inch panicle. The ligules have a distinct ring of small hairs. Flower spikelets are small and grow from March to May, with 3 to 8 florets per spikelet.

**Biology**

Common Mediterranean grass reproduces by seed, with individual plants producing hundreds to thousands. Seeds generally fall near the parent plant and germinate nearby. As an annual, plants grow quickly and die off by late summer and fall, leaving tufts of dead plant material.

**Locations**

No populations have been reported on the Navajo Nation, but they have common in the Mojave Desert.

**Ecological Threat and Management Concerns**

As an annual, common Mediterranean grass can leave highly flammable material, that increases fire risk in desert and rangeland areas. Fires fueled by Mediterranean grass can burn with enough intensity to kill nearby shrubs (DiTomaso et al, 2013). This results in a cycle, where common Mediterranean grass and other annual grass species displace native species, convert shrublands to grasslands, and increase soil erosion.

**Key ID Tips**

- Forms small, low-growing clumps
- Grows in thick clumps with several stems
- Small, fine hairs prominent at the ligule.
- Small, dense spikelets with 3—8 florets.

Additional safety measures and limitations may apply for each method. Refer to the [Navajo Nation Integrated Weed Management Plan](#) for more information.

**Mechanical/Manual Removal**

Hand removal or mowing can be impractical due to the small size of individual plants. Soil disturbance may also increase weed establishment. Tilling and plowing can reduce surface density, but can also lead to reinvasions.

**Biological**

No biological control organisms are available.

**Cultural Control**

Grazing can be effective for removing biomass, but the resulting soil disturbance can increase germination of it and other annual grasses. Burning is not recommended as it can promote the growth of Mediterranean grass.

**Chemical**

Use of herbicides can be effective. Refer to the product labels for information application rates, timing, and approved application methods.

Recommended herbicides include:

- Fluazifop-P-butyl
- Glyphosate
- Imazapyr

**References**

DiTomaso, J.M., G.B. Kyser et al. 2013. *Weed Control in Natural Areas in the Western United States*. Weed Research and Information Center. University of California. 544 pp.

USDA, NRCS. 2023. PLANTS Database. Available at <https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/>. National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA



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