

HORSETAILS



Field Horsetail

BOTANICAL NAME: *Equisetum species*

WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE? The most common one in our area, field horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), is a perennial. It ranges in size from 4 inches to 2 feet tall and looks like miniature pine trees. Scouring rush is also found in our area and is a perennial. Scouring rush appears leafless and will grow 2 to 4 feet tall. Both plants have jointed stems like bamboo. The furrowed stems of horsetails are structurally toughened by silica grains and throughout time were used to scour churns



Scouring Rush

and pans, as fine sandpaper and to polish metal.

WHERE DO THEY LIKE TO GROW? These plants thrive in many habitats and are at home in wet, poorly drained areas of fields and grasslands; wet meadows; streams and other sites with high water tables and in well drained sites in farm fields, orchards and nursery crops, and in sites with sandy or gravelly soil such as along roadsides, railroad tracks and beaches.



Field Horsetail Spore Bearing Cones

HOW DO THESE PLANTS MULTIPLY? Horsetails propagate by spreading rhizomes (root system). Leafless (fertile) stems appear in the early spring and a cone-like structure emerges from the top of the thick stem. This cone-like structure bursts open when it matures, releasing spores which germinate in the soil and form new plants. The vegetative (infertile) stems will then come up from the rhizomes. New plants arise from a root system that can grow 6 feet deep and 10 to 20 inches around the plant. The root system develops tubers which store food for the plant in time of stress.

HOW DO I CONTROL THEM? Horsetails are difficult to control once they become established. They have few problems with pests and disease. A number of different

control methods and several seasons will be necessary to eliminate this weed.

NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL:

- Horsetail's growth is significantly slowed by the shade of taller plants. Try planting taller growing plants in infested areas to help shade out horsetail.
- Spread a black plastic sheet across the entire area and leave in place for at least a year.
- Improving the drainage and increasing the organic matter in the infested area along with regular mowing may make the site less attractive to horsetail.
- Tilling is not recommended since breaking the root system (rhizomes) in pieces only results in more plants being created.

CHEMICAL CONTROL:

- Please call the Noxious Weed Control Office for advice on using herbicides to control this plant.

NOTE: These plants are not considered noxious in the State of Idaho or in Kootenai County

Want more information? Contact:

Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control

10905 N. Ramsey Road

Hayden, ID 83835

208-446-1290 / TTY 208-446-2145

kcnoxioussweeds@kcgov.us or www.kcweeds.com

Kootenai County does not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment in, its public meetings, programs, or activities. Requests for assistance or accommodations can be arranged by contacting the Noxious Weed Control Department at (208) 446-1290 or County Administration Office TTY (208)446-2145 with 3 days advance notice.