

Persian Darnel – A HIDDEN PROBLEM

Persian darnel is a growing problem in spring and durum wheat fields across Montana and North Dakota. Reduced- and no-till production can leave grassy weed seeds, like Persian darnel, close to the soil surface.

“Persian darnel is hard to spot in the emerging crop as it looks similar to wheat and/or wild oats,” says Steve King, technical service representative for Bayer CropScience. “So growers don’t know they have it and don’t use a herbicide that controls it. They find out about the infestation at harvest, which is not a good surprise.”

Persian darnel is shorter than a maturing wheat crop, remaining below the canopy. Discovering an infestation in the combine not only hurts yields, but can significantly impede harvest.



“Getting early identification and applying the appropriate herbicide is key to managing this grassy weed in cereals.”

- Kevin Thorsness

Persian darnel spreading in North Dakota:

■ 2002 ■ 2009



Source: Kevin Thorsness, Bayer CropScience

Persian darnel distribution in Montana:

■ Prominent infestation
■ Minor infestation
■ No reported infestation



Source: Montana State University Extension

Early identification is key to managing Persian darnel

Persian darnel can cause a yield loss of up to 83 percent in spring wheat by competing for nutrients and moisture, according to Montana State University Extension. The key to identifying Persian darnel seedlings is the red base of the stem near the soil surface, and its dark green leaves that are smooth and shiny, according to Kevin Thorsness, Bayer CropScience technical manager.

Tough weeds and tougher herbicide protection

Weeds continually evolve and change right along with new practices and technologies. Wheat growers experiencing new challenges from tough weeds like Persian darnel, ACC-ase resistant Wild Oats, true cheat and Japanese brome have a new solution. Rimfire Max controls more than 30 tough-to-handle grasses and broadleaf weeds, and tankmixing with Huskie herbicide allows one-pass weed control.



Persian Darnel, *Lolium persicum*

Photo by: John Holman,
Kansas State University

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