

**Why is foxtail heading already...because it's not foxtail****June 11, 2020**

We have been receiving questions regarding a grass “already” in turf. Homeowners have indicated they think it is foxtail and/or crabgrass. Little barley (*Hordeum pusillum*), shown below in a Lincoln lawn this week, is a winter annual grass that is seeding now, and may be confused with foxtails because of similarities among seedheads. Crabgrass has a different seed head, but when mowed can look like little barley. However, yellow foxtail (and others) are summer annual grasses, which are now in the 2-3 leave stage and barely visible, except in bare spots or thin lawns.

Certainty (sulfosulfuron) is labeled for post emergence little barley control in warm-season grasses, and Tenacity (mesotrione) has fair post emergence activity when little barley is immature. We generally don't recommend postemergence herbicides for control of little barley in late spring/early summer. Little barley, as a winter annual will soon succumb to the heat of summer and die. Little barley is best “controlled” by encouraging a dense turf stand or with a preemergence herbicide in fall.

Bottom line. Yellow foxtail (a summer annual) is not yet seeding, but little barley (a winter annual) is. Postemergence control of little barley is not recommended – the species will die soon. Improve turf now or in fall to limit little barley establishment, or use a preemergence herbicide in September.

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Figure 1. Little barley in a lawn, June 2020. Lincoln NE.