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Horticulture News

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Little barley can be very aggravating to a homeowner! Mainly because you don't always notice it until you see these little straw colored seeds heads that resemble barley on a short plant. Many people mistake little barley (*Hordeum pusillum*) for a little foxtail because the foxtail and little barley seedheads are similar. However, little barley is a winter annual that comes up in late September - October and spends the winter as a small plant. It thrives in the cooler spring temperatures, forms seed heads and dies out usually by July. Foxtail, on the other hand, is a summer annual that does well in hot weather. Also, foxtail will not produce seedheads until mid-to late-summer.

The best control for little barley is a thick lawn that is mowed high enough that sunlight does not hit the soil. Little barley seed will not germinate in such conditions. Overseeding in the fall can thicken up a tall fescue lawn and prevent a little barley infestation.

However, if you do not plan to overseed, preemergence herbicides can be used to provide at least partial control of this weed. Dimension (dithiopyr) is labeled for barley (*Hordeum* spp.) which would include little barley and therefore can be used to keep this weed under control. Dimension can be found in several homeowner products including Hi-Yield Turf & Ornamental Weed & Grass Stopper and Bonide Crabgrass and Weed Preventer. Other products may contain Dimension in combination with fertilizer or broadleaf weed killers.

Because little barley is a winter annual that germinates in the fall, apply the preemergence herbicide in August and water in to activate. If overseeding, do not apply any preemergence herbicide as it will interfere with the germination of tall fescue.