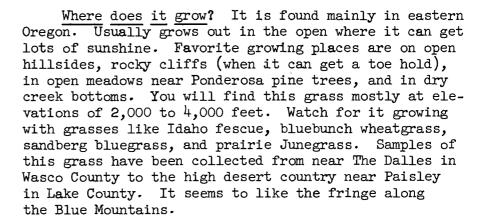
Rattlesnake Grass

(Bromus brizaeformis)



Is it important? It furnishes a little bit of stock feed early in the spring, but not much. When good ranges start going bad, you will find this grass increasing. It will increase on poor range because it gets ripe in July and livestock don't like to eat it then. Some people grow this grass as an ornamental, as you might grow cactus, desert flowers, or wild roses.

What does it look like? The grain-bearing spikelets grow on the very tip of each branchlet. They look like the rattles on a rattlesnake's tail. When the grain is ripe and you shake the plant, it makes a sound like an upset rattler. For this reason it is called "rattlesnake grass." It usually grows about a foot high.

Look closely and you will see that most of the leaves are on the lower part of the The stems and leaves are covered with tiny soft silver hairs. When the plant is green, the joints (nodes) on the stem are dark brown and the base of the spikelets is a reddish purple color.

When the plant gets ripe, the stems turn dark red; the grain gets heavy; and the branches droop or hang down mostly toward one side of the plant. Looks something like tiny decorations on a Christmas tree.



Spikelet (2 x).

1000-6-73



Rattlesnake grass is an annual of little im-

portance except as a

curiosity. The heads rattle when ripe (1 x).

> Extension Service, Oregon Stata Univarsity, Coryaliis, Joseph R. Cox, director, This publication was produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperativa program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties.

Description:

Length of life -- Annual.

Height -- Usually about a foot.

Bunch or sod -- Bunch.

Growth period -- Starts growing in the spring and dies by the middle of July.

How does it spread -- By seeds. Seeds are moved by water, wind, animals, and birds.

Leaf shape -- Short, narrow, and pointed. Veins easily seen.

Leaf location -- Near the base of the stems. Few tiny ones up higher.

Shape and size of grain -- About a quarter of an inch long. Covered with a thin papery tan covering like bat wings. Flat grain is red when mature.

Other names: Rattlesnake Chess, Rattlesnake Brome.

Does it look like anything else? Once you learn to identify bromegrasses, you know right off that this is a bromegrass. All the wild bromes have beards (awns). The awns on this grass, however, are real short and appear only on the tips of the spikelets. The stems, leaves, and seed heads are covered with soft, silvery hairs.