

Washington Invasive Ranking System

Washington Natural Heritage Program

Schedonorus arundinaceus (Tall Fescue)

Assessed by

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Ecological Impact Rank: **Moderate** (51)

Confidence: **High** (83)

Management Difficulty Rank: Moderate (54)

Confidence: High (80)

Biological Characteristics of Invasiveness: High (90)

Confidence: Moderate (58)

Concern Related to Distribution and Abundance: High (73)

Confidence: Moderate (60)



Photo Credit: David Giblin 2023, used under Creative Commons license (Burke Herbarium, University of Washington, 2024).

Ranking Notes

Rapid assessment only, based primarily on professional expertise.

Legal Listings

[Washington State Weed Board](#): No

[Washington Invasive Species Council](#): No

Section 1: Distribution and Abundance

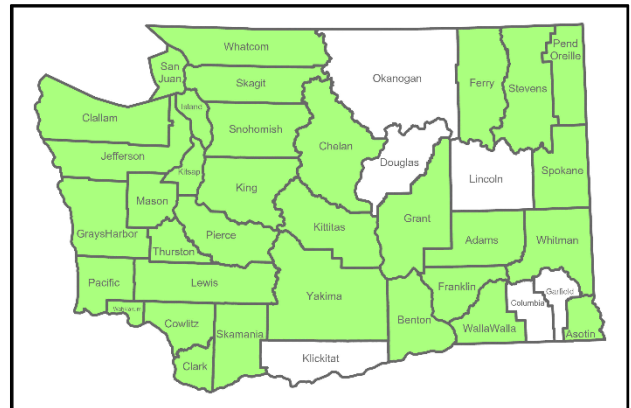


Figure 1. Distribution of counties where *Schedonorus arundinaceus* has been documented in Washington State (CPNWH, 2024; EDDMapS, 2024; iNaturalist Community, 2024).

Q1: Current Range Size in Washington

Rating: High

Confidence: High

Schedonorus arundinaceus is documented in 85% of counties in Washington State (CPNWH, 2024; EDDMapS, 2024; iNaturalist Community, 2024).

Source: Professional expertise, Herbarium records and other observations

Q2: Current Trend in Total Range

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q3: Proportion of Potential Range Currently Unoccupied

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q4: Local Range Expansion or Change in Abundance

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q5: Diversity of Ecosystems Invaded

Ecosystem types: Grassland & Shrubland

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Section 2: Biological Characteristics

Q6: Aggressive Mode of Reproduction

Rating: Yes

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q7: Innate Potential for Long-Distance Dispersal

Rating: Unknown

Confidence: Not Rated

Source:

Q8: Potential to be Spread by Human Activities

Rating: Yes

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q9: Allelopathy

Rating: Yes

Confidence: Moderate

Research indicates that *Schedonorus arundinaceus* is allelopathic (Hughes, 1987). Closely related *S. pratensis* also produces allelopathic chemicals (Hughes, 1987).

Source: Informal publication

Q10: Competitive for Limiting Abiotic Factors

Rating: Yes

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q11: Growth Form

Rating: Yes

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q12: Germination Requirements

Rating: Unknown

Confidence: Not Rated

Source:

Q13: Invasiveness of Other Plants in Genus

Rating: Yes

Confidence: High

Schedonorus pratensis is introduced in the Pacific Northwest and *S. giganteus* is found in northeastern North America (Darbyshire, 2021). Both exhibit invasive traits, though neither are commonly listed as invasive species, perhaps because of their value as pasture grasses.

Source: Professional expertise, Flora of North America treatment

Q14: Shade Tolerance

Rating: Low/Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q15: Disturbance Tolerance

Rating: Yes

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q16: Propagule Persistence

Rating: Unknown

Confidence: Not Rated

Source: Professional expertise

Q17: Palatability

Rating: Yes, plant is unpalatable

Confidence: Moderate

Some populations are palatable, while others are not, depending on endophytes. It's commonly planted as a pasture grass but with endophyte-free seed. Feral populations may be endophyte free or not.

Source: Professional expertise

Section 3: Ecological Impact

Q18: Impact on Ecosystem Abiotic Processes

Abiotic Processes: Geomorphology, Nutrient dynamics, Light availability

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q19: Impact on Ecosystem Structure

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: High

Schedonorus arundinaceus does not just cause changes in structure of grasslands—where it was planted for pasture, it is very difficult to re-establish trees and shrubs, and it excludes woody plant recruitment unless there is a major investment in physical removal.

Source: Professional expertise

Q20: Impact on Ecosystem Composition

Rating: High

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q21: Impact on Particular Native Species

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q22: Observed Ability to Invade Undisturbed Ecosystems

Rating: Insignificant

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q23: Observed Ability to Invade Naturally Disturbed Ecosystems

Rating: Yes

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Section 4: Management Difficulty

Q24: General Management Difficulty

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Q25: Minimum Time Commitment

Rating: Moderate

Confidence: High

In order to reforest a tall fescue pasture, one must control the tall fescue until trees grow above it, which can take a few years.

Source: Professional expertise

Q26: Impacts of Management on Native Species

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

Impacts of management on native species are generally low, though this may be because there is often little native community remaining in areas with tall fescue.

Source: Professional expertise

Q27: Inaccessibility of Invaded Areas

Rating: Low

Confidence: Moderate

Source: Professional expertise

Q28: Sociopolitical Implications of Management

Rating: Moderate/Low

Confidence: High

Source: Professional expertise

Additional Comments

None

References

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Darbyshire S.J. 2021. *Schedonorus P. Beauv.* In: Flora of North America. <http://floranorthamerica.org/Schedonorus>. Accessed: February 6, 2025.

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