

# Hoof Print

A TerraLink Publication

## Pasture Care

### Pasture Care Check-off List

It's spring! Well, almost spring. Time to prepare your pastures and hay fields for the usual heavy summer use. Here is a convenient check-off list to help you get ready.

☒ **Soil Test:** Soil tests provide the basis for your nutrient inputs for the upcoming season. Normally, a basic test is sufficient, providing soil levels of the major and secondary nutrients. Every few years a detailed test should also be done to check micronutrient levels. You now have the advantage of having your soil tested right at our location in Abbotsford. The Plant Science Lab provides lab services for soil, water and tissue testing for the agriculture, greenhouse and turf industries. We also work with outside labs for manure, compost, fertilizer, disease and other more specific tests. Drinking water (pass or fail) testing is also available.

☒ **Limestone:** Especially in the Fraser Valley, our soils naturally acidify over time due to our heavy rainfall and leaching. The grass plants in your field won't absorb nutrients efficiently if acidity is not in the proper pH range. Lime is also important because most horse manure that is spread is heavy in sawdust and urea which will lower the soils pH levels over time. Keeping the soil pH at a level of 6.0 – 6.5 is essential for healthy grass and a long grazing season.

☒ **Fertilizer:** Nitrogen (N) is the most common limiting nutrient. Each growth cycle of a pasture generally takes up most, if not all, of the soil N available. This means that more than one application of granular fertilizer or manure is recommended throughout the

grazing season. Typically, two or three applications of 40 – 60 pounds of N per acre are recommended. Call us to help you with the best choice of fertilizer to buy.

☒ **Manure:** Most people feel the field is the best place to dispose of manure. It can be stored until spring, but make sure to cover it to avoid the nitrogen leaching into the ground water, which could find its way into the local aquifer. Have a sample of your manure tested to see what plant nutrients it could provide. Apply it to the field before you add artificial fertilizer. This is just good economic common sense. Top up the nutrients with fertilizer from TerraLink; available from either the Abbotsford or Delta locations, or any TerraLink dealer around the province. Finally, use a harrow to spread the manure evenly, to avoid nutrients in hot spots that could burn the grass.

## Pasture and Hay

### Timothy

Timothy (*Phleum pratense*) has long been recognized as the grass of preference for horses. It is popular when it comes to hay because it is a fairly soft grass that is high in energy and low in protein. It is grown both in hay blends and by itself. Spring growth is not too early, and yield and palatability are high. Timothy is tolerant of acidity, withstands some spring flooding or waterlogged soils and is fairly free from problems caused by insects, diseases and other pests. It causes few, if any, nutritional problems and gives hay that characteristic "nose" which only comes from a good Timothy content.

#### Suggested Varieties:

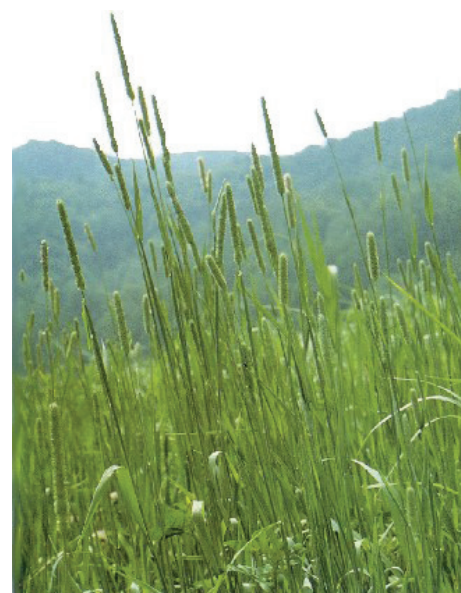
**BARLIZA** – Very persistent with high yields under grazing or when frequently cut. Late maturity makes

this a perfect component in seed mixtures. Equally suited for pasture mixtures or pure hay stands. High quality and very leafy hay.

**CLIMAX** – High-yielding, high protein variety that mixes well with alfalfa. Excellent palatability. Recovers quickly after cutting and is able to withstand low temperatures. Excellent choice where winter injury is a problem.

**TUUKKA** – High yielding and cold tolerant. Provides superior season-long production of nutritious forage even in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th cuts. Recommended for hay, grazing, silage and green chop (direct feeding). Long lasting companion when mixed with alfalfa or clovers.

**BARLEO** – Very persistent with high yields under grazing or when frequently cut. Late maturity with exceptional Spring development. Excellent disease resistance and persistence.



## Pasture & Hay

# Richardson Seed Grass Seed Blends

TerraLink offers a full line of Richardson Seed forage mixes that can be used for seeding a new field or overseeding an existing one.

### Horse and Sheep Pasture Mix

This is our most popular choice for horse owners. Formulated to meet the nutritional needs of horses, this mix tolerates close grazing and it can be cut for hay. It does really well throughout the province, from the coastal areas to the interior.

### General Pasture Mix

Suited to a hobby farm that has a bit of everything, this blend is meant for mixed grazing. Quick regrowth and a good mix of species to keep all the animals well fed, this mix is adaptable throughout BC climates.

### Hay Baler Mix

This mix is a high performance blend for high quality hay production. Containing a large portion of orchardgrass, plus timothy and tall fescue, this mix provides excellent feed value. A small percentage of annual ryegrass has also been added to act as a nurse crop until the stand gets established. The components of this mix have been selected with productivity and palatability in mind to produce top-quality haylage.

Please contact us for more detailed information about these mixes or to enquire about custom blends.

*\*Richardson Seed forage mixtures do not contain endophyte-enhanced grasses.*

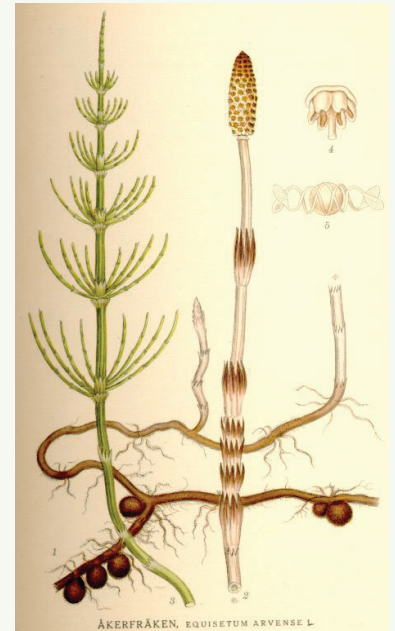


## TerraLink Pest Bulletin - Toxic Weed Series

# Horsetail

A very common plant that most people recognize, horsetail is nevertheless a toxic weed. As with all toxic weeds, or any toxic substance for that matter, the degree of toxicity depends in some extent to availability. Like other toxic weeds, the mere existence of the weed in the field doesn't mean it is going to be eaten. After all, it is rough, has high silicate content and must be fairly unpalatable. But, if it is in hay in high enough amounts that animals cannot avoid, it will be toxic.

Although there are more than 15 species of horsetail to be found in BC, the major problem one is Field Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*). It is a prehistoric perennial plant, and can be recognized by two plant forms: a "fertile" version with no leaves, about a foot high, light brown, with a spore-producing narrow cone at the top. The other version is "sterile", green, about two feet high, with whorls of stick-like leaves growing at the joints. The plants are found in patches, and likely every individual plant will be connected by one massive, creeping, tuber-bearing root system which can exist very deeply in the soil.



### Control

The root system makes horsetail very difficult to eradicate. When cut, the pieces will regenerate. Also, because of the nature of the foliage, it can be difficult to get herbicides to stick to the leaves, if one can call them that. Make sure to check registrations on labels before using chemical herbicides. These include Casoron (a granular product that is easy to apply), Amitrol-T and MCPA. Whereas Casoron and Amitrol-T have systemic activity and damage horsetail roots, MCPA provides temporary control of just the foliage. Although applications of MCPA damage horsetail and knock it down, the root system is untouched by this herbicide and the plants will grow back.

In conjunction with chemical control, it is best to take an integrated approach and use cultural control methods too. Since horsetail often likes poorly-drained areas, one should improve the drainage in combination with other controls. Over-seed heavily with strong, mat-forming perennial grass species. Try to control horsetail prior to spore formation to help reduce the weed from spreading.

### References:

- Toxicity of *Equisetum* to Horses. OMAFRA. <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/horses/facts/07-037.htm>
- Field Guide to Noxious and Other Selected Weeds of BC. BCMA, <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/weedguid/horsetl.htm>
- Crop Protection – Weed Control Factsheet: Horsetail (*Equisetum*). BCMA, June 1996. <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/hrsetail.htm>

## Please Take Note

# New Name – Same Great Service!

Call 604-946-8338 – did you notice the name change? When you call our Delta location and ask for the Feed, Farm & Garden Store, you will no longer hear "Roddicks". After his many years of service to the equine clientele

in Delta, Ladner and surrounding area, Noel Roddick has retired. His name is retired too, so from this point forward, the name you see and hear will be, "TerraLink – Delta Division."

You will still have access to all the same great products and staff assistance at the Delta location. So if you need to have blankets cleaned, need feed and pet food, tack, grooming gear, leather care, hoof care or wormers, we're still here!

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