

good plant?

WHAT is it, anyway? bad plant?

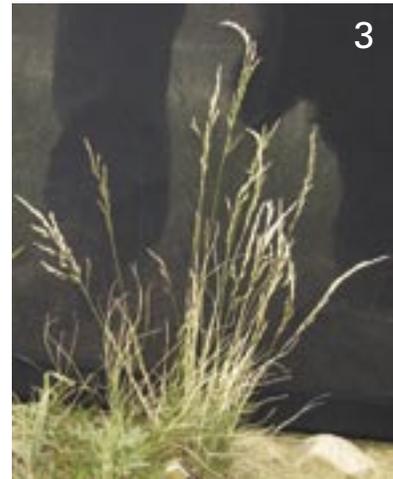
Identify the following plants if you can. Also, do you know if they are good, bad, or benign? Find the answers on page 14.



Do you know what it is? _____
Is this plant good, bad, or benign? ____



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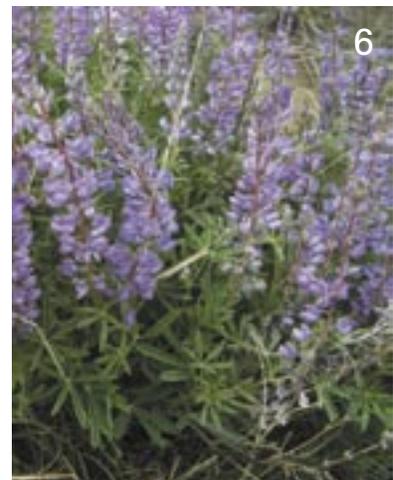
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good plant? bad plant?

ANSWERS

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Plant No. 1 is one of the many species of Indian paintbrush found in Wyoming (one of which is our Wyoming state flower). I

think everyone would agree this plant would fit nicely in the "good" category. It is native to the state, adds a splash of color to our native rangelands, and does not seem to have any bad habits!



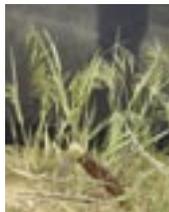
Plant No. 2 is the leafy spurge, a dreaded noxious weed. This one is definitely bad. Leafy spurge is not native to North America. It was introduced from

Eurasia and is very invasive, meaning it has the ability to out compete native or otherwise desirable vegetation and spread rapidly. If this plant is on your property, contact a local weed and pest control district or the nearest University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) office for help with control or management recommendations.



Plant No. 3 is one of many native bluegrasses. Close inspection of the leaves of this grass reveal leaf tips that look like

the front of a canoe or row boat. There are also two parallel lines down the middle of the top of the leaf that look like little train tracks. Look real close. Some species of native bluegrasses grow rapidly in the cool, wet spring months then go dormant by early summer, turning yellow with hints of purple and red. Because of this, some people may be tempted to think these plants are weedy annuals, but they are actually perennial grasses that provide a fair amount of forage for wild and domestic grazing animals. Most of these native bluegrasses would fit pretty easily in the good or benign category.



Plant No. 4 is another "bad" one. If you guessed downy brome, commonly referred to as cheatgrass, you are right!

This Eurasian annual grass was introduced to North America and has become widespread and problematic. It thrives in disturbed areas and, after maturity, becomes a nuisance and fire hazard. If cheatgrass is abundant on your property, it may be an indicator of overgrazing or another disturbance. If present and properly managed, desirable perennial plants can help crowd out cheatgrass. Contact your local weed and pest control district or nearest UW CES office for help with control or management recommendations.



Plant No. 5 is Dalmatian toadflax and should be placed squarely in the "bad" category. This may look like one of those pretty flowers that

should be in a flower box, and it is actually related to snapdragons. If it would stay in your flower box, that might be fine, but this aggressive invader escapes! It is now commonly seen along roadsides and has little trouble invading native rangelands and displacing native plants. This aggressive invader came from southeastern Europe. If this plant is on your property, contact a local weed and pest control district or nearest UW CES office for help with control or management recommendations.



Plant No. 6 is a native lupine. There are several species of lupine native to the rangelands of Wyoming. The answer to the good,

bad, or benign question has to be "it depends." Lupines are native and, although they tend to increase after fire, they are not invasive exotics. These plants are also members of the pea family and fix nitrogen (low levels), meaning they add nitrogen to the soil. All of these characteristics should earn points toward the good category; however, lupines can poison sheep or cattle. If that is of concern to you, it might rack up a couple of "bad" points. Others might consider this plant benign.

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